



Lesson 2 - Pre-Visit Meet the All-American Girls!

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify the relationship between the AAGPBL and other roles held by women during World War II.
- Recognize the role of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League in changing public opinion about women and sports.

Time Required: One class period

Materials Needed:

- "Women at War" cards (included)
- Postcard templates (included)

Vocabulary:

Home front - The people who stay in a country and work while that country's soldiers are fighting a war in a foreign country. Their work supports the war effort.

Industry - Work devoted to a particular craft, art, business, or manufacture.

Work force - The number of workers.



Applicable Common Core State Standards

RI.3.1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RI.3.2. Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

RI.3.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 3 topic or subject area*.

RI.3.5. Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

RI.4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.2. Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.4.3. Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

RI.4.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

RI.4.5. Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

RI.5.1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.5.2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.5.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 5 topic or subject area*.

RF.3.3., RF.4.3., RF.5.3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.



Applicable Common Core State Standards (*Continued*)

RF.3.4., RF.4.4., RF.5.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

SL.3.1., SL.4.1., SL.5.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

L.3.1., L.4.1., L.5.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.3.2., L.4.2., L.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

W.3.3., W.4.3, W.5.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W.3.4., W.4.4, W.5.4. With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.



Lesson

1. Begin the lesson by telling students that until the late 1800s, public opinion held that girls were physically unable to compete in sports. Many doctors even said that it was unhealthy for women to exercise.
2. Ask students how they feel about these ideas. Do people still believe that these ideas are true today? Ask students, "What might have happened to change people's minds about girls playing sports?"
3. Explain that with the help of pioneer female athletes, public opinion about girls and women in sports began to change.
4. Discuss that the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League helped change many people's minds about women in sports. This group of women played baseball from 1943 through 1954. Ask students if they can think of an important event that was going on in the early 1940s.
Answer: World War II.
5. Ask students to think about how World War II might have affected women in sports.
6. Discuss that all Americans felt the impact of World War II. While thousands of men were fighting in Europe and in the Pacific, those left on the **home front** worked to help the war effort. People believed that it was important for everyone to work together to help end the war as soon as possible.
7. Women shouldered great responsibilities when their husbands, sons, and brothers went off to war. Brainstorm with students a list of the ways in which women might have supported their country during World War II.
8. Review the list and discuss that until World War II, women were not only discouraged from sports; they were also discouraged from working in many different **industries**. Once the war started and the male **work force** became very small, women were badly needed to help keep those industries running, so people had to change their opinions about what type of work was appropriate for women.



Women's History: Dirt on Their Skirts – Level 1

9. Divide students into 8 teams or small groups. Give each group one of the "Women at War" cards (included).
10. Have students work within their small groups to read the information on their card and decide how that person contributed to the war effort in America during World War II.
11. Allow each group to share their findings with the rest of the class.
12. Review the various roles. Ask students which jobs they would have preferred and why. What skills would have been needed to do the various jobs?
14. Ask students how women during World War II changed people's opinions about what women were capable of doing. How did the women of the AAGPBL help change people's opinions about women in sports?



Activity

1. Distribute postcard templates and coloring materials. Instruct students to write a postcard to an AAGPBL player. Encourage questions about the players' experiences, on-field position, things they might have seen while on the road, their favorite activities, etc. Draw a picture on the front.

- OR -

For a more advanced lesson, ask students to imagine they are AAGPBL players and write a postcard to a friend or family member describing what their lives are like. Use any of the following questions to prompt the writing exercise. Draw a picture on the front.

- Describe where you are and what landscape you see. Include the month of your visit and what type of weather you are experiencing.
 - What kinds of experiences have you been having?
 - What has been your favorite part of playing on your team? Least favorite?
 - What are the other girls like?
 - How is your team doing? Have you been winning? Losing?
 - What sights have you seen while traveling?
 - What is your favorite part of traveling and playing baseball?
 - Do you miss anything or anyone?
2. Students may present their postcards to the class from the point of view of their character.

Conclusion:

To conclude this lesson, review that World War II gave women the opportunity to show what they could do both at work and on the baseball field. They opened the door for other women to follow in their footsteps in the decades to come.

To check for understanding, have students write a journal entry addressing the following questions:

- If you could meet one of the people profiled on the "Women at War" cards, which one would you want to meet? Why?
- What questions would you want to ask her?



Women's History: Dirt on Their Skirts – Level 1

Name _____

Date _____



Women at War

<u>Red Cross Volunteer</u> During World War II, Red Cross volunteers provided medical care and comfort to wounded members of the armed forces and their families. These volunteers served in hospitals, made emergency supplies for war victims, organized blood drives, and sent food packages to prisoners of war.	<u>Civilian Defense</u> Civil defense volunteers were ready to help other people in case of a wartime emergency. They were ready to move children, sick people, and the elderly to safe places. The volunteers drove Army trucks, often at night and without headlights on, so they could not be seen by enemy aircraft. They supervised wartime blackouts and air-raid drills.
<u>USO Volunteer</u> Volunteers of the USO (United Service Organizations) staged live performances called “camp shows” for the entertainment of soldiers in the armed forces. Some USO volunteers were famous Hollywood entertainers, others were not as well known. All of the performers worked together to boost the morale of those serving in the war. These volunteers often traveled in order to perform at military bases located close to the front.	<u>WAC - Women's Army Corps</u> Members of the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) served in uniform, just like soldiers. Other than nurses, they were the first women to serve in the U.S. Army. They traveled to areas of combat along with the Army; however, they were not allowed to fight. Instead, they did many jobs such as operating radios and telegraphs, driving supply trucks, and fixing airplanes.
<u>Factory worker</u> Factory workers kept the army supplied during World War II. Women worked in factories that made airplanes, ships, and tanks. They also put together radio parts and made candles, which were very important for the war effort.	<u>Farmer</u> Farmerettes, who worked for the Land Army of America , took the place of men who had left farms to fight in the war. These workers helped keep American farms running by plowing fields, and planting and harvesting crops. Their jobs included driving tractors, mixing feed, and raising animals.

Home Front

On the **home front**, people helped the war effort in many ways. Children collected aluminum cans and tin foil, and people donated scrap metal, which could be melted down and re-made into airplane and tank parts. Many women made socks, sweaters, and blankets to send to soldiers. Families grew "victory gardens" in their back yards to help them grow a little extra food. Food had to be rationed - that means that food was divided up evenly among people to make sure everyone got a fair share.

Baseball Player

In the early 1940s, Phillip K. Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, learned that the upcoming Major League baseball season might have to be cancelled. Many players had joined the armed services, and there might not be enough players left to fill all of the Major League teams. He came up with the idea of the **All-American Girls Professional Baseball League**, a professional baseball league for women.

The league started with four teams and later expanded to eight teams. The teams played games 7 days a week, and played double headers on Sundays. Players received \$55.00 to \$125.00 per week. In the 1940's and early 1950's this was very good pay. Some girls earned more than their parents!

Although the women of the AAGPBL were athletes, they were still expected to behave like ladies. Wrigley and his advertising agent promoted the new "Girls Baseball" as good entertainment for war workers and their families.