



Lesson 2 - Pre-Visit On the Field: The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League

Objective: Students will be able to:

- Recognize the role of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League in changing public opinion about women and sports.
- Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary source documents.
- Analyze a film in terms of historical connections and setting.
- Make connections between a film and print sources.

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Materials Needed:

- The film *A League of Their Own* (PG)
- Your preferred means of screening a movie
- Several copies of the "All-American Girls Document Packet" (included)
 - o All articles may be found on ProQuest if you prefer to use originals

Vocabulary:

Chaperone - A person who accompanies a young unmarried woman in public

Home Front - The civilian sector of a nation at war when its armed forces are in combat abroad

Ideal - A standard of perfection or excellence

Primary Source - Source created by people who actually saw or participated in an event and recorded that event or their reactions to it

Professional - Playing a sport for pay on a full-time basis

Secondary Source - Source created by someone not present when an event took place

Semi-professional - Actively engaged in a sport for pay but on a part-time basis



Applicable Common Core State Standards:

RI.9-10.7. Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

W.9-10.1., W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.2., W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.9-10.4., W.11-12.2. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

RH.9-10.1., RH.11-12.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

RH.9-10.4., RH.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

RH.9-10.6., RH.11-12.6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

RH.9-10.9., RH.11-12.9. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.



Lesson

1. Begin the lesson with a discussion about women's baseball history. Use the following questions to help determine students' familiarity with the topic:
 - Have you ever heard of women or girls playing baseball today? In the past?
 - Have you ever heard of any women's baseball teams?
2. Discuss that for modern women who want to play baseball, there are several different options: playing on all-female baseball teams, playing on otherwise all-male teams, or playing softball. While women-only baseball clubs first appeared in the 1800s, the trend was most popular during World War II.
3. Briefly discuss how World War II influenced the experiences of many American women. Mind map what the students already know about women's roles during World War II. Students should understand that women were called on to fill many roles on the **home front** to help meet war needs.
4. Explain that new roles and opportunities for women applied not only to the world of work, but also to the world of sports. Explain that students will be examining sources related to the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.
5. Review the differences between primary and secondary sources.
6. Provide each student with an "All-American Girls Document Packet" (included). Have students read each of the documents and answer the questions on each page.
7. After students have had time to review the document packets and answer the questions, come back together as a class and discuss the following questions:
 - Who formed the AAGPBL? Why?
 - Describe the average AAGPBL player using as much detail as possible.
 - When did the league operate? Construct a timeline of AAGPBL history from its inception to its close.
 - Discuss evidence of bias in the sources. What can be determined about expectations of women during the 1940s and 1950s?
8. Introduce the activity.



Activity

1. Introduce the film *A League of Their Own*, about the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. You may choose to show select scenes or watch the whole movie if time allows.
2. Hold an informal post-viewing conversation. Use the following questions to help guide discussion:
 - How does the AAGPBL as portrayed in the movie compare to the real AAGPBL students read about in the document packet?
 - What additional questions does the movie raise?
 - How would you go about finding answers to those questions? (Brainstorm a list of potential sources.)

Conclusion:

To conclude this lesson and check for understanding have students select one of the following essay topics. Students should answer their chosen question referencing evidence from the primary and secondary sources, as well as the film watched in class.

- The AAGPBL is an excellent historical example of a profitable and popular women's professional sports league. For the league to succeed, however, the idea of a female athlete had to be acceptable to the public. How did the media coverage and promotion of the league reveal gender ideals of the time?
- Like many women on the home front during World War II, AAGPBL players had to negotiate their changing role in society. How did the AAGPBL players both challenge and reinforce women's roles?



Chicago Daily Tribune, May 16, 1944

120 GIRLS START SOFTBALL DRILL: Former Baseball Leaders Direct Tryouts

120 girls reported today and 90 will be retained for the six teams at Racine, Kenosha, South Bend, Rockford, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Each team carries 15 players, four pitchers, two catchers, five infielders, and four outfielders.

Salary is \$40 to \$85 a week and, unlike in baseball, pay begins on the opening day of training. Those who are not retained will be given two week's severance pay and transportation back home.

P.K. Wrigley, owner of the Cubs, and the main sponsor of this league, believes that girl ball players – and masculine ones – for that matter, should get the same treatment as any other type of employee when services are no longer required.

The idea behind the league is to combine feminine attractiveness and athletic skill. The muscular, boyish type is out, no matter if she's a potential Babe Ruth or Bob Feller. Uniforms with flared skirts are part of the plan to present the girls as they really are.

No. 1 among the league's don'ts is the one barring the gals from wearing slacks. Each team has a chaperone. In a few days the girls will attend personality classes designed to make them more feminine than ever.

Answer the following questions on your own paper.

1. In what ways were the female athletes of the AAGPBL treated the same as male athletes? In what ways were they treated differently than male athletes?
2. According to this article, what are some of the ideal physical and character attributes of an AAGPBL player?
3. Describe the AAGPBL players' uniforms. In what ways did these uniforms promote public acceptance of female athletes?



Los Angeles Times, Jul. 31, 1949

SLUGGERS IN SKIRTS

You won't believe this, but the Fort Wayne Daisies baseball team had a fair chance for the pennant last year until its star pitcher dropped out mid-season to have a baby. Yes, sir, the pitcher had won 13 and lost eight, struck out 101, and compiled an earned run average of 2.01 by July. And then the baby came.

At Rockford, Ill. The Peaches' shortstop last year was Harrell. This season it's Doyle. Two different players? Not at all. Shortstop simply got married. Over in Peoria, the Redwings' shortstop also got married, and promptly decided to retire from baseball. After leading the league in runs batted in, too.

And where can such things happen? Where do matrimony and motherhood make managers wish they had nothing more than sore arms and charley horses to worry about? They happen in the All-American Girls Baseball League. This thriving Midwestern organization of eight teams proved to more than 900,000 fans in 1948 that you should never underestimate the power of a woman.

Before you decide that this is softball, vaudeville, or a leg show, let it be said that the girls play real baseball – professional baseball. They throw overhand, use man-size gloves and wear spiked shoes. They slam the ball with Louisville Slugger bats which are only slightly smaller than the models used by men in the major leagues. They can execute a drag bunt, a squeeze play, a delayed steal. The only concessions to the girls' size, strength and stamina are a slightly smaller diamond and a slightly larger ball. "We've made the game fit the girls," says League President Max Caray, an ex-big leaguer. "And we've found that they run their seventy-two feet between bases as fast as a man can run his ninety."

Answer the following questions on your own paper.

1. Compare and contrast the game of baseball played by the AAGPBL and by major league players.
2. When was this article written? Compare the date of this document to the date of document 1 in this packet. How did the size of the league change?
3. What can you determine about the success of the league as a business?



The Washington Post, May 7, 1952

WRIGLEY, RICKEY FORMED 'LIPSTICK LEAGUE' AS A BACKSTOP IN CASE WAR BLOTTED OUT MAJORS

Back in the World War II days of 1943, two smart baseball men, Phil Wrigley of the Chicago Cubs and Branch Rickey, then of the Brooklyn Dodgers, conceived the All-American Girls Baseball League.

The enterprising pair were not women's rights advocates...when they organized the "lipstick league." No, these shrewd bosses of the nines were taking that "ounce of prevention" when it looked like Uncle Sam's defense efforts would make such inroads that big league clubs would be forced to suspend operations. Preparing for this possibility, Wrigley and Rickey started recruiting feminine talent with the thought of presenting professional girls' baseball in the major league parks. However, when it became apparent that men's baseball would survive the draft, Wrigley released the franchises to ten Mid Western cities with the understanding that all clubs were to be set up on a civic non-profit basis.

At its inception, the League was practically a softball loop. The girls used a regular 12-inch softball and underhand pitching. But each year the girls were put to sterner tests. The ball was shrunk until now it measures slightly under 10 inches, as compared with the 9 ¼-inch ball used in the men's major leagues. In 1948 the girls were weaned from underhand pitching. This was plenty tough on the former softball aces, but you wouldn't guess it now. The League's pitchers throw an overhand or side-arm ball with the finesse of their masculine counterparts, and you're apt to spot even a couple submarine hurlers swishing the ball down its path to the batters box, which is just five feet less than the Bob Fellers must deliver.

The girls play strictly in accordance with men's major league rules, but being the weaker sex, they were allotted concessions on the size of their diamond. Base paths were shortened from 90 feet to 72 feet, after tests established that a woman will run with about 79 percent of the speed and power of a man. The shorter basepaths give the illusion that the girls are traveling as fast as their men-folk. However, it's no illusion when a girl hits the dirt with spikes riding high for that slide into base...this despite quite a bit of bare leg between her skirt and her three-quarter-length socks.

These "tom boys turned pro" come from all parts of the United States, plus Canada and Cuba. Most of them grew up in large families and learned how to swing a bat playing with their brothers. Now that they play for pay, a rookie will get about \$225 per month and a star about \$700, the girls take their game with deadly seriousness.

(Continued on next page)

In spring training camps, which are conducted along the lines of the big leagues, the girls are put through a daily grind of calisthenics on through intra-squad games and nightly blackboard sessions. Ahead of them is an arduous league schedule of 110 games, commencing on May 15th and closing with a Labor Day double header.

In such cities as Fort Wayne and South Bend, Ind., Rockford, Ill., and Grand Rapids, Mich., feminine baseball has become big business with some town drawing four times their population every season. With these Mid western fans, the girls' games are not oddities, but furnish their summer's sports entertainment. All-American Girls League officials envision the time when similar leagues will be established in other parts of the country. So, who knows, maybe the time will come when sports fans throughout the nation will be looking forward to the World Series of Girls Baseball!

Answer the following questions on your own paper.

1. Who originally formed the AAGPBL? When?
2. What was the primary reason the league was formed?
3. In what ways did the game of baseball as played by the AAGPBL change over time? Why do you think the game changed?
4. Describe the average schedule of an AAGPBL player.

***The Teams of the AAGPBL***

Years of operation	Team Nickname	City
1943-1954	Peaches	Rockford, Illinois
1943-1954	Blue Sox	South Bend, Indiana
1943-1950	Belles	Racine, Wisconsin
1951-1952		Battle Creek, Michigan
1953		Muskegon, Michigan
1943-1951	Comets	Kenosha, Wisconsin
1944	Chicks	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1945-1954		Grand Rapids, Michigan
1944	Millerettes	Minneapolis, Minnesota
1945-54	Daisies (formerly Millerettes)	Fort Wayne, Indiana
1946-1950	Lassies	Muskegon, Michigan
1951-1954		Kalamazoo, Michigan
1946-1951	Redwings	Peoria, Illinois
1948	Colleens	Chicago, Illinois
1948	Sallies	Springfield, Illinois

1. In what part of the country were the teams of the AAGPBL located?

2. Based on the chart, when did the first teams play? _____
3. How many teams were formed at the beginning of the league and what were they?

4. What was the last year of operation for the AAGPBL? _____
5. What teams operated for the entire existence of the AAGPBL?



Chicago Daily Tribune, May 17, 1948

IT'S BASEBALL WITH CURVES, AND SOME NEW ANGLES, TOO

By Robert Cromie

Chicago devotees of the feminine version of the national game, in which rugged and sometimes lovely young ladies belt the cover off the ball, slide into bases with spikes high and gleaming, and bait umpires with a venomous skill that Leo Durocher would envy, have an even happier summer in prospect this year than ever before...

Pay in the circuit, for players, ranges from a minimum of \$55 weekly to a top of \$100, with all expenses paid on the road. The league also provides a chaperone for each team, and forbids the players to wear slacks either on or off the field or to have boys' haircuts. Average age of the players is slightly more than 21, with the youngest 16 (Dolly Pearson, Muskegon third baseman, which is completing her final year in a Pittsburgh high school by mail).

The league's leading hitter last year was Dorothy Kamenshek, a University of Cincinnati girl, who rang up a .306 average with the Rockford team for whom she plays first base. Not even Fred Leo, publicity director for the league, thinks that any of the girls ever will wear a big league uniform, but he does point out that Johnny Gottselig, who has scouted for the All-American, signed 17 year old Rita Briggs, now with Rockford, when he saw her drive out a triple while catching for an otherwise all-boy high school team in Ayer, Mass. Leo adds that Charlie Grimm, Cubs' manager, once said that he would be willing to pay \$50,000 for Dorothy Schroeder, Fort Wayne shortstop, if she were a man.

Harry Wilson, a spokesman for the league, reports that in its four years of operation there has been only one fight on the field – which should be some kind of record for an enterprise involving that many women.

Answer the following questions on your own paper.

1. Compare the salary range listed in this article to the range listed in document 1 of this packet. How did players' salaries change over time?
2. Referencing this article, as well as the other documents in this packet, describe the average AAGPBL player. How old was she? What did she look like? How was she expected to conduct herself?
3. Underline or highlight instances of bias evident in this article.



<i>Grand Rapids Chicks</i> 1950		<i>Grand Rapids Chicks</i> 1950	
HOME GAMES		GAMES AWAY	
May 20	South Bend	May 18, 19	South Bend
May 27, 28*28	Fort Wayne	May 21*, 22, 23	Fort Wayne
June 1, 2, 3	Kenosha	May 24, 25, 26	South Bend
June 4*, 5	Racine	May 29, 30-30	Muskegon
June 15, 16, 17	Peoria	June 6, 7	Kenosha
June 18*, 19, 20	Rockford	June 8, 9	Racine
June 21-21, 22	Muskegon	June 10, 11*, 12	Peoria
June 26, 27	South Bend	June 13, 14	Rockford
June 28, 29	Fort Wayne	June 23, 24	Muskegon
June 30, July 1	South Bend	June 25*	South Bend
July 2*, 3, 4-4	Muskegon	July 5, 6, 7	Fort Wayne
July 8, 9*, 10	Kenosha	July 13-13, 14	Kenosha
July 11, 12	Racine	July 15, 16*16	Racine
July 16, 19, 20	Rockford	July 23*, 24, 25	Rockford
July 21, 22	Peoria	July 26, 27	Peoria
July 30*, 31, Aug. 1	South Bend	July 28, 29	South Bend
Aug. 6*, 7	Kenosha	Aug. 2, 3, 4	Racine
Aug. 8, 9, 10, 11	Racine	Aug. 12, 13*13	Kenosha
Aug. 20*, 21, 22	Peoria	Aug. 17, 18, 19	Rockford
Aug. 23, 24	Rockford	Aug. 25, 26, 27*	Peoria
Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1	Fort Wayne	Aug. 28, 29	Fort Wayne
Sept. 3*	Muskegon	Sept. 2, 4-4	Muskegon
GAME TIME		Double numerals indicate double headers	
Double-headers	7:00 P.M.	*Denotes Sunday	
Single Games	8:30 P.M.	Downtown Ticket Office:	
Beginning Aug. 6		Peck's Drug Store, Monroe at Division	
Double-headers	7:00 P.M.		
Single Games	8:00 P.M.		

1. How many teams were playing in 1950? _____
2. How many games were the Chicks scheduled for in 1950? _____
(Be careful of double headers!)
3. What was the price of admission for bleacher seats in Grand Rapids? _____
4. What time did games start? _____
5. What time did double headers begin? _____
6. How many "off days" (days without games) did the Chicks have in the 1950 season?
