

Paul Robeson
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Overview:

An outstanding scholar, athlete, actor, singer, civil and human rights activist, Paul Robeson is one of the most accomplished African-Americans of all time. Robeson was a graduate of Rutgers college (valedictorian and all American football player), and Columbia University Law School, a professional football player, leading Broadway and London stage actor, international singer and film star, an outspoken opponent of fascism and colonialism, and a fighter for the civil and human rights of all oppressed peoples.

A close friend of W.E.B Du Bois, Paul Robeson led the anti-lynching movement with Albert Einstein –YES! *The Albert Einstein!*. Robeson actively campaigned in 1948 for U.S. Presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, and was one of the few entertainers who refused to cooperate with the house of un-American activities during the McCarthy era in the 1950's. Robeson was fighting for equality and dignity long before the civil rights movement of the 1960's. All who now enjoy the benefits of freedom and equal rights stand on the shoulders of Paul Robeson.

With this lesson, students will examine the biography of Paul Robeson and create a character analysis.

Biography adapted from: www.robesonthemovie.com

New Words:

Socialism, segregation, blacklisted, communism, racism

Grade Level:

Middle Grades

Primary Learning Objective(s):

The students will:

- identify the events of racial conflict in the life of Paul Robeson and chronicle his response to those events.

Approximate Duration of Lesson:

Two day lesson

Materials and Equipment Needed:

Journals, computes or tablets to research information, graphic organizer handouts, computer, LCD projector or whiteboard. Printed copies of articles if electronic resources are not available.

Background/Preparation:

Have students read the biography of Paul Robeson found at <http://www.biography.com/people/paul-robesson-9460451> . If this source is no longer available or if you are unable to access it, check with your school library or the local public library for biographies of Paul Robeson.

Procedures/Activities:

- Let students know that they will create a KWLH, which will ask: What do you KNOW; What do you WANT to know; What you have LEARNED; and HOW you learned it. Students can create a KWLH chart by drawing four columns on a sheet of paper and label each with one of the letters, KWLH in each column. The teacher can also provide students with the a KWLH form found at: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr1kwlh.htm>.
- Next, students will complete the (K) Know and (W) What they want to learn sections of the KWLH about Paul Robeson.
- The students will then watch the four part video series about Paul Robeson's life and work critiqued by Dr. Lester J. Rodney of Morehouse College on youtube.com (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1YKOP5Ow9E>).
- Lastly, the students will complete the (L) Learn and (H) how they learned the information portion of the KWLH.
- Once students have completed their KWLH charts, inform them that they will now create an "I Am Poem" based on the life of Paul Robeson using the format found at the end of this lesson.

Assessment Strategies:

The students will use the KWLH to write their own essays about their interpretation of the life and work of Paul Robeson. They will also include three ways in which he influenced the entertainment industry and identify other entertainers who use celebrity status to empower others. The students can also create the following artifacts as evidence of their learning:

- ✓ A dramatic monologue based on the work and music of Paul Robeson;
- ✓ A poster collage that symbolizes the ideals and beliefs of the Paul Robeson; or
- ✓ A song of spoken word piece dedicated to the life and work of Paul Robeson and his contribution to the movement.

Remediation:

Students can use a character traits graphic organizer to identify information learned about Paul Robeson's life. The students can create a web graphic (spokes and circles) to record the information. Worksheets can be found at the end of this lesson.

Additional Resources:

YahooMusic: Paul Robeson

<http://music.yahoo.com/paul-robeson/>

Folk Music: Paul Robeson

<http://folkmusic.about.com/od/artistskr/p/Paul-Robeson.htm>

Paul Robeson and Jewish Music

<http://www.folkworks.org/all-columns-by-/35453-paul-robeson-and-the-jews>

References:

The Biography of Paul Robeson

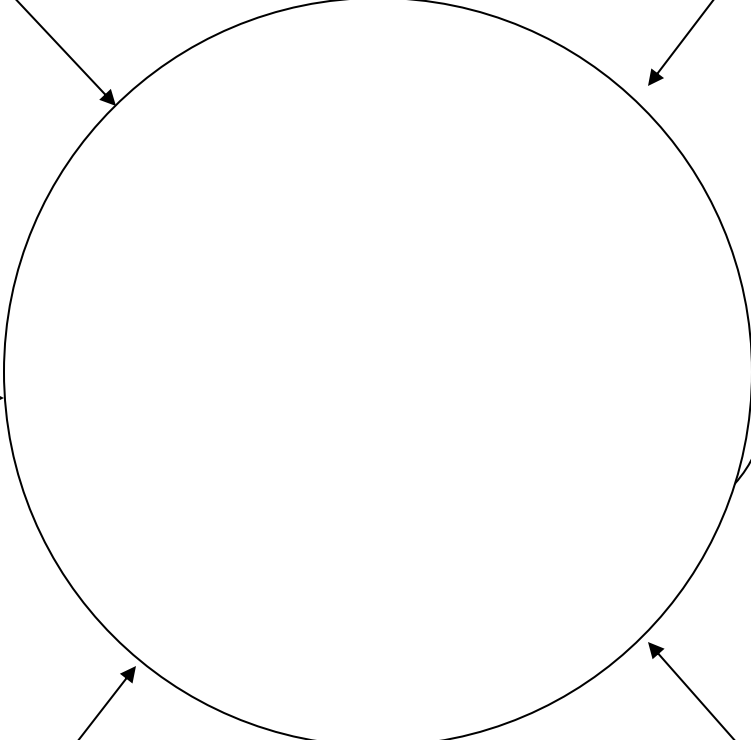
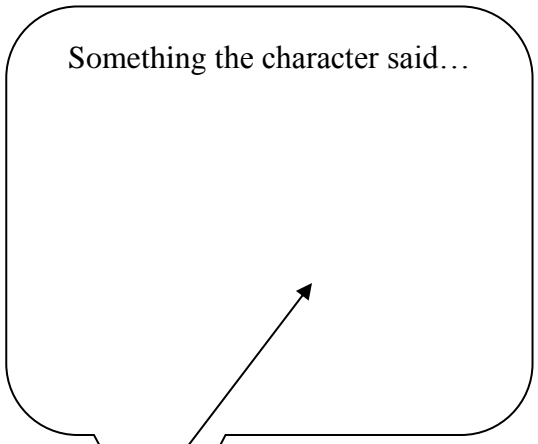
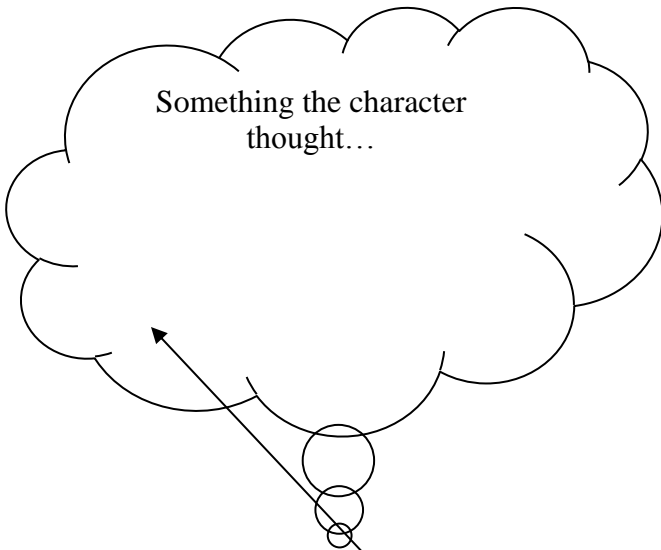
<http://www.biography.com/people/paul-roberson-9460451>

Wikipedia: Paul Robeson

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Robeson

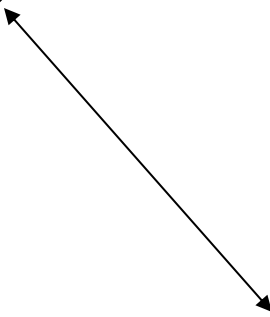
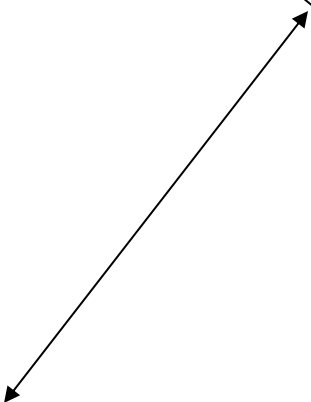
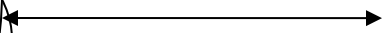
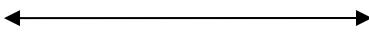
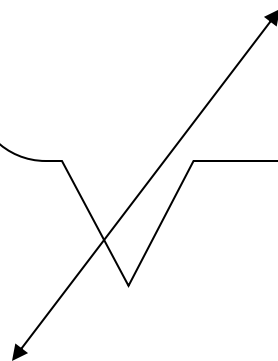
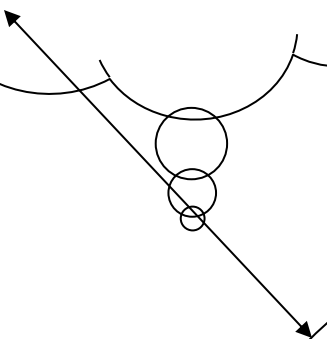
I Am Poem

- I am _____ (Two special characteristics)
- I wonder _____ (Something you are curious about)
- I hear _____ (An imaginary sound)
- I see _____ (An imaginary sight)
- I want _____ (A desire you have)
- I am _____ (The first line of the poem repeated)
- I pretend _____ (Something you pretend to do)
- I feel _____ (A feeling about something imaginary)
- I touch _____ (An imaginary touch)
- I worry _____ (Something that bothers you)
- I cry _____ (Something that makes you sad)
- I am _____ (The first line of the poem repeated)
- I understand _____ (Something you know is true)
- I say _____ (Something you believe in)
- I dream _____ (Something you dream about)
- I try _____ (Something you make an effort on)
- I hope _____ (Something you hope for)
- I am _____ (The first line of the poem repeated)



Something the character
thought...

Something the character said...



Character Trait:

Character Trait:

Something the character felt...

Something the character did...

Character Trait:

Character Trait:

Social Studies Course of Study Standards

FOURTH GRADE

Standard 14. Describe the social, political, and economic impact of the modern Civil Rights Movement on Alabama.

- Identifying important people and events of the modern Civil Rights Movement

Examples: people—Martin Luther King, Jr., George C. Wallace, Rosa Parks; events—Montgomery bus boycott, Birmingham church bombing, Selma-to-Montgomery march

- Identifying benefits of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act

SIXTH GRADE

Standard 13. Describe the role of major civil rights leaders and significant events occurring during the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Examples: civil rights leaders—Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King, Jr.; events—Brown versus Board of Education; Montgomery bus boycott; student sit-ins; march on Washington, D.C.; Freedom Rides; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Malcolm X; voter registration efforts; Selma-to-Montgomery march.

SEVENTH GRADE – Citizenship

Standard 11. Describe examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence of groups, societies, and nations, using past and current events.

- Tracing the political and social impact of the modern Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to the present, including Alabama’s role. *Extension to consider the impact.*

ELEVENTH GRADE

Standard 12. Trace events of the modern Civil Rights Movement from post-World War II to 1970 that resulted in social and economic changes, including the Montgomery bus boycott, the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School, the march on Washington, and the Freedom Rides.

- Tracing the federal government’s involvement in the modern Civil Rights Movement, including the abolition of the poll tax, the desegregation of the armed forces, the nationalization of state militias, Brown versus Board of Education, the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Explaining contributions of individuals and groups to the modern Civil Rights Movement, including Martin Luther King, Jr., James Meredith, Medgar Evers, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
- Identifying people and events in Alabama that influenced the modern Civil Rights Movement, including Rosa Parks, Autherine Lucy, John Patterson, George C. Wallace, Vivian Malone, Fred Shuttlesworth, *the Children’s March*, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, and the Selma-to-Montgomery march
- Describing the development of a Black Power movement, including the change in focus of the SNCC, the rise of Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael and the Black Panther Movement
- Describing the impact of African-American entrepreneurs on the modern Civil Rights Movement Examples: S. B. Fuller, A. G. Gaston

English Language Arts Course of Study - Appendix D:

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 7. *Integration of information from Walking Tour, sculptures, and original photographs.*

Grades 6-8. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Grades 9-10. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts).

Grades 11-12. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Standard 7.

Grades 6-8. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Grades 9-10. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Grades 11-12. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

English Language Arts Course of Study

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

[SL.6-12.1] Engage [initiate and participate – grades 9-12] effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade-level topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Information from Walking Tour, sculptures, and original photographs.

[SL.6.2] Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

[SL.7.2] Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

[SL.8.2.] Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

[SL.9-12.2] Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally), [in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, - grades 11-12] evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source [and noting any discrepancies among the data – grades 11-12]. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

Language Standards

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

[L.6-8.6]. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.