

### Focus Question:

*Who are some American sports legends, and why do we remember them?*

### Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography

Among the many athletes throughout American history, there are several record-setting superstars who revolutionized their sports. *American Sports Legends* highlights four athletes of tremendous character who left behind inspiring legacies. Overcoming obstacles such as discrimination, physical limitations, and sexism, these legends proved that, with passion and commitment, anything is possible.

The book and lesson are also available for levels W and Z.



### Lesson Essentials

#### Instructional Focus

- ☐ Ask and answer questions to understand text
- ☐ Determine elements of a biography
- ☐ Describe information provided by photographs
- ☐ Recognize and use dashes
- ☐ Identify and use homophones

#### Materials

- ☐ Book: *American Sports Legends* (copy for each student)
- ☐ KWLS / ask and answer questions, elements of biography, dashes, homophones worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

#### Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

##### • Words to Know

**Story critical:** *determination* (n.), *discriminated* (v.), *ideals* (n.), *legacy* (n.), *revolutionized* (v.), *versatile* (adj.)

**Enrichment:** *demeanor* (n.), *inscription* (n.), *integrate* (v.), *intimidated* (adj.), *ordeal* (n.), *sharecropper* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *individual* (adj.), *participate* (v.), *prove* (v.), *record* (n.), *remember* (v.), *represent* (v.)

### Guiding the Reading

#### Before Reading

##### Build Background

- Write the word *commitment* on the board and read it aloud to students. Have students work in small groups to discuss the meaning of the word *commitment*. Point out that *commitment* means dedication or determination. Provide students with a sheet of lined paper and have them free write about an example of commitment in their own lives. Have them consider what goals they were working toward, the obstacles they faced, and why they continued even when it became difficult. Invite students to share their responses in small groups. Have volunteers offer their experiences to the class.

##### Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *American Sports Legends*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

##### Introduce the Reading Strategy:

##### KWLS / ask and answer questions

Explain to students that engaged readers ask and answer questions while they are reading and that one way to organize this information is to use a KWLS chart. Give students the [KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#). Have students look at the cover of the book and complete the *K* section with information they know about famous sports stars. Invite students to preview the photographs in the book with a partner to create questions about American sports legends. Have students record this information in the *W* section of the

### Guiding the Reading (cont.)

KWLS chart. Invite volunteers to share their questions with the class. Point out that as they read, they should look for the answers to these questions as well as create new questions to add to the chart.

### Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

#### Elements of a biography

- Ask students to explain the difference between a biography and an autobiography (biography: the story of a person's life written by someone else; autobiography: the story of a person's life written by that person). Explain that this book gives biographical accounts of four athletes. A biography includes information about a person's accomplishments, his or her influence on the world, and his or her personality.
- Write the words *Accomplishments*, *Influence*, and *Personality* on the board in a three-column chart. Have students turn to a partner and discuss the meaning of each word. Discuss the definitions as a class (accomplishments: success achieved through practice or training; influence: an effect on someone or something; personality: the qualities that make each person unique).
- Point out to students that as they read about each sports legend they should pause to consider each person's accomplishments, influence, and personality.

### Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 24. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about American sports legends. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

### During Reading

#### Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What made Jim Thorpe a tremendously versatile athlete?* (level 2) pages 5–9
- *How did Thorpe make history in the 1912 Olympics?* (level 1) page 7
- *In what ways did Babe Didrikson dominate women's sports in her time?* (level 2) pages 10–13
- *Why was Jackie Robinson baseball's most daring player?* (level 2) pages 14–19
- *How did Jackie Robinson's demeanor allow him to stay committed to equality?* (level 2) pages 15–19
- *Who was Jesse Owens, and what made his participation in the Olympics both amazing and controversial?* (level 2) pages 21–23
- *How did each athlete in the book demonstrate strength of character?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *In what ways did each athlete in this book revolutionize their sports?* (level 3) multiple pages

### Text Features: Photographs

Explain that photographs are helpful when reading because they provide the reader with important information about the text. Have students work in small groups to review the photograph on page 13. Ask students: *Why did the author include this photograph of Babe Didrikson? How does this photograph help you to connect more with the text? What information can you gather from this photograph that was not included in the text?* Have students work with a partner to review other photographs in the book and discuss as a class why the author chose to include each photo.

### Skill Review

- Have students refer back to the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Ask students to review their questions recorded prior to reading the book. Have them circle any questions that were answered and record this information in the *L* section of the chart. Ask students to share what they learned with the class. Have students record new questions in the *W* section of the chart. Point out that effective readers continually create new questions as they are reading in order to stay engaged with the text.
- Review with students the elements of a biography: accomplishments, influence, and personality. Point out that identifying these aspects of the life of a historical figure will help readers understand that person's place and importance in history.
- Model identifying the elements of a biography. **Think-aloud:** *I know that the elements of a biography include a person's accomplishments, influence, and personality. As I read, I look for this information about each athlete and the details that support these findings. For example, I know that Babe Didrikson was an incredible female athlete during a time when few women participated in sports. Her accomplishments include earning a gold medal in the Olympics, creating a women's basketball team, winning eighty-two golf tournaments, and*

### Guiding the Reading (cont.)

*founding the LPGA. Babe influenced the world of sports by drawing attention to female athletes and inspiring other women to compete. She was a very determined, hard-working person who showed courage by performing as an athlete during a time when women were not widely accepted in sports.*

- Record the above information about Babe Didrikson in the chart on the board. Invite volunteers to add additional information.
- Model how to complete the [elements-of-biography worksheet](#). Remind students to use details from the text to support their answers.
- Invite students to return to the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Have them complete the S section of the chart with the information they still want to know about American sports legends. Encourage volunteers to share the information they still want to know.

### After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Skill Review

#### Graphic Organizer: **Elements of a biography**

Review the elements-of-biography worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class the details they chose.

### Comprehension Extension

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

### Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers should include the following: *Some American sports legends include Jim Thorpe, Jackie Robinson, Babe Didrikson, and Jesse Owens. We remember these athletes not only for their tremendous athletic ability but also for the courage and determination they showed in the face of discrimination.*)

### Comprehension Checks

- [Book quiz](#)
- [Retelling rubric](#)

### Book Extension Activities

#### **Build Skills**

#### Grammar and Mechanics: **Dashes**

- Explain to students that a dash is a punctuation mark that can be used for different purposes:

to show an afterthought or summary at the end of a sentence or to “set off,” or clarify, information within a sentence.

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Jackie took it all with quiet dignity—and determination.* Explain to students that in this sentence, the dash is being used to add a thought or more information to the end of the sentence.
- Explain the difference between a dash and a hyphen. Remind students that hyphens are used in compound adjectives, adverbs, and nouns, such as *highest-paid Brooklyn Dodger*. Point out that hyphens are shorter in length and are used to connect two or more words.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students reread page 18 and highlight all of the sentences containing a dash. Then, have them turn to a partner and explain how each dash was used. Review students’ findings as a class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [dashes worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Word Work: **Homophones**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Jim Thorpe turned them down to return to Carlisle and play one more season of college football.* Circle the word *one*. Ask students to explain what the word *one* refers to (a number, an amount).
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Thorpe won four of the five events in the pentathlon, set a world record for the decathlon, and won the gold medal in both events.* Circle the word *won*. Ask students to explain what the word means (came in first place).
- Write the words *one* and *won* on the board. Explain that words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings are called *homophones*. Repeat this process with the words *to* and *two* on page 6 and *four* and *for* on pages 22 and 23.
- Invite students to share other homophone pairs they may know. Write these pairs on the board and invite volunteers to use each homophone in a complete sentence.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the homophones *for*, *four*, *too*, *two*, *one*, and *won* on the board. Have students use each word in a sentence on a separate sheet of paper. Invite them to share their sentences aloud.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [homophones worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.