1. Using a graphic organizer like the one below, place the following sequence of events in the correct order:
   - Rube Foster and others form the Negro National League;
   - Professional African American teams begin forming;
   - Jackie Robinson plays his first game as a Brooklyn Dodger;
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2. Pretend that you are on a field trip to the Baseball Hall of Fame. What questions about the Negro leagues would you have for the people who run the museum?

3. Three of this book's vocabulary words are compound words, or words made up of two smaller words. Which ones are they? Use them in sentences.

4. How did the timeline on pages 18 and 19 help you to understand both the history of baseball and the history of African Americans playing the sport?
“Batter up!”

A player from the Chicago American Giants stepped to the plate. He was ready to take a pitch. His hands were wrapped around the narrow neck of the bat. His feet were planted apart and firm on the ground. He fixed his eyes on the pitcher. Behind him, the catcher gave the sign for a fastball.

The crowd settled into the rickety stands made from old boards. A few voices could be heard over the creaking of seats. They were mocking the visitors and yelling words of praise to their hometown team.
“Strike ‘em out!” they called to the pitcher. “That batter can’t hit the broad side of a barn!”

The Giants talked quietly among themselves. They paid no attention to the words coming from the stands. They weren’t worried. The man they called “Home Run” was at bat.

The pitcher began his windup. His arms came in. His knee rose up. The ball whipped toward home plate in a straight line.

WHACK!

The batter drove the fastball high into the sky. It fell to the ground beyond the bases. It rolled into the deep grass at the edge of the outfield.
Before 1947 barnstorming was a way of life for most African American players. Barnstorming is traveling from one small town to another. It could be a hard life. Good barnstorming teams attracted large crowds however. Teams such as the Indianapolis ABCs, New York’s Lincoln Giants, and the Hildale Daisies from Darby, Pennsylvania, were well-known barnstormers. Their opponents included college teams, amateurs, and other barnstormers.

Rube Foster and the Chicago American Giants

The first season for the Chicago American Giants started in 1911. The Giants’ manager was Andrew “Rube” Foster. He had played baseball for more than twenty years. He was a pitcher famous for his screwball. It was a tricky pitch that was hard for batters to hit. At seventeen Foster had joined a Texas team called the Waco Yellow Jackets.
Rube Foster knew a lot about the game. He had a good head for business. Most of all, he had confidence in the future of African American baseball. Foster and a group of team owners and managers created the Negro National League (NNL) in 1920. The owners and managers decided that Rube Foster would be the league’s first president. This father of Negro baseball was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1981.

The Chicago American Giants became one of the best teams in the NNL. They barnstormed America in a private railroad car. They were stars in the African American community. African American newspapers were filled with stories about them. Their home field was a five-thousand-seat park on Chicago’s south side.
Foster had put together a great team for the 1911 season. It was hard to spot a weakness at any of the positions. A few of the team members were among the best players in baseball.

Grant “Home Run” Johnson had played under Foster before. He played in the infield when Foster managed the Philadelphia Giants. He worked at both shortstop and second base.

Home Run was a hitter who could blast the ball over the fence. This is how he got his nickname. He was well liked by the other players. He had been a baseball star for nearly thirty years when he finally retired.

Willie Foster was Rube Foster’s half-brother. He was also a star pitcher for the Chicago American Giants for more than a decade. Foster helped the Giants win the Colored World Series in 1926 and 1927. He is considered by many to have been the best left-handed pitcher to ever play in the Negro leagues.

After retiring, Willie Foster became a coach at Alcorn State College. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1996.
One of the greatest players to ever take the field for the Chicago American Giants was John Henry “Pop” Lloyd. In his later years, Lloyd became a team manager. He was able to give young players a feeling of confidence.

Pop Lloyd started out as a catcher. Later he played shortstop and then first base. Lloyd was tall, thin, and fast. He ran so smoothly that people were tricked. They thought he was not running very fast, but he was! Pop Lloyd played baseball for at least twelve different teams. He was asked why he changed teams so often. He said, “Where the money was, that’s where I played.”

Lloyd was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1977. Some people have called him the greatest baseball player of all time.
Other African American baseball leagues were founded throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The leading teams from different African American leagues met for World Series championships. During the 1930s there were East-West All-Star Games as well. In the winter months many of the players traveled south to play baseball. They went to Mexico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

Year after year, the Chicago American Giants were one of the best teams of the Negro leagues. They won titles in 1920, 1921, and 1922. In 1926 and 1927 they won the Colored World Series.

After the end of the NNL in 1931, the Chicago American Giants played for the Negro Southern League. Then they played for the Negro American League. Over the years the Giants changed their name. They remained one of the greatest teams in the Negro leagues. In 1952 the American Giants, as they were called at that time, played their last game.

Center fielder Art Pennington, left fielder Herman Andrews, and third baseman Alex Radcliffe of the Chicago American Giants.
The game of baseball provides a unique look into American culture. The integration of baseball was a symbol for the changes in American society. From 1887 until 1947, African Americans and whites played baseball on separate teams and in separate leagues. Then Jackie Robinson was brought in from the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Other major league teams were later integrated. The Negro National League that Rube Foster helped found in 1920 closed its doors in 1931. The Negro American League, begun in 1937, played its final games in 1960.

Nine former players from the Negro leagues and early African American teams were elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame during the 1970s. This was done in order to recognize these great men in baseball. Since then, many other African Americans have been elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.
### African Americans and Baseball in America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820s and 1830s</td>
<td>A game similar to baseball develops in America, gaining widespread popularity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>The Knickerbocker Club of New York publishes the first set of rules for the game of baseball.</td>
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<td>1862</td>
<td>The Union Grounds, the first fully enclosed baseball park, is built in Brooklyn, New York.</td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>The first professional team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, is formed.</td>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>The first professional league, the National Association of Professional Baseball Players, is formed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>Professional African American teams begin forming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>New York’s Cuban Giants become the first African American baseball players to receive salaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>The International League bans teams with white players from signing contracts with African American players.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Pitcher Andrew “Rube” Foster begins a career as a player/manager with the Leland Giants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Rube Foster forms the Chicago American Giants with partner John Schorling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Rube Foster and others form the Negro National League (NNL).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>The Eastern Colored League (ECL) is founded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>The NNL and ECL play their first World Series.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The Baseball Hall of Fame is established.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Jackie Robinson plays his first game as a Brooklyn Dodger on April 15.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>The Negro American League, the last of the Negro leagues, ends.</td>
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Glossary

confidence  n. firm belief in yourself.
fastball n. pitch thrown at a high speed.
mocking v. laughing at; making fun of.
outfield n. the part of a baseball field beyond the diamond or infield.

unique adj. having no like or equal; being the only one of its kind.
weakness n. a weak point; slight fault.
windup n. a swinging movement of the arms while twisting the body just before pitching the ball.

Reader Response

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