



SPEAK, WRITE, ACT: HOW JACKIE ROBINSON “TELLS IT LIKE IT IS”

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Time	Transcript
0:00	He broke baseball’s color barrier... ...and ignited the modern civil rights movement.
0:05	You know his name: Jackie Robinson. But let’s learn more about this man who spoke out through words and actions on and off the baseball field.
0:15	“...telling it like it is -- that’s the only way I know how to be me.” (Jackie Robinson)
0:19	When Jackie Robinson accepted Branch Rickey’s offer to join the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945 they knew the first black man in the major leagues was about to face racist threats and abuse and they agreed he would not retaliate verbally or physically.
0:37	“I want a player who’s got the guts NOT to fight back.” (clip from feature film 42)
0:41	While he had to turn the other cheek, Jackie let his athletic talent do the talking. His daring base running and stealing – skills he brought to the Negro Leagues, and then the majors – drove the opposition to distraction.
0:55	All-star skills and a fiercely competitive spirit, honed during his childhood in Pasadena and as a 4-letter man at UCLA, made him a star. But society treated him, and all African Americans, as second-class citizens.
1:11	So every hit, every play, every stolen base spoke out loudly for his pride and dignity.
1:18	After 1950 when Robinson began speaking out, he was labeled ungrateful and a “troublemaker,” but he remained committed to fighting for a level playing field.
1:29	“I don’t mind trouble, but I do believe in fair play and justice.” (Jackie Robinson)
1:34	A prolific writer, Jackie Robinson unleashed the power of his pen to advocate for that fair play and justice.

1:41	As a soldier in World War II, when court martialed for refusing to move to the back of a bus, Robinson wrote letters to the NAACP and others rallying support against this injustice.
1:54	Once retired from baseball, he wrote regular columns for the <i>New York Post</i> and the <i>New York Amsterdam News</i> on topics from civil rights, to youth empowerment, to fair housing.
2:05	He authored his life story in multiple autobiographies and worked to create greater representation for black athletes as editor of <i>Our Sports</i> magazine.
2:16	Robinson also corresponded with presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon, insisting they live up to their promises on civil rights legislation.
2:25	In all of these efforts, Jackie used the power of the pen in his fight for first-class citizenship for all people.
2:34	A skilled and eloquent public speaker, Robinson was a commanding presence with an enormous influence.
2:41	His 1957 national speaking tour to benefit the NAACP, raised a record \$1 million.
2:49	A driving force in the Civil Rights Movement, he raised that voice in support of landmark campaigns across the south.
2:56	“There is not one Negro, not one that I know in this country, that has it made until the most underprivileged Negro in St. Augustine, Florida has it made.”
3:05	And throughout the sixties, he spoke out on the political stage with speeches on behalf of candidates – Republicans and Democrats - that he believed would support his mission for social justice and equal rights. Robinson was a pioneer off the field as well, lending his voice to major radio and television networks as a broadcaster.
3:28	Along with his columns and speeches, Robinson was on the front lines of marches and protests.
3:34	In 1958, Robinson co-chaired the Youth March for Integrated Schools, leading 10,000 demonstrators in Washington, D.C.
3:43	Jackie, Rachel and the Robinson family marched in 1963’s legendary March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.
3:52	In 1964 he protested the Republican National Convention and its anti-civil rights nominee Barry Goldwater.

4:00	Action also meant fundraising. The annual <i>Afternoon of Jazz</i> at the Robinson home raised money for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and causes like bail money for jailed student protestors in the south.
4:13	And he believed that true equal rights would only come with economic empowerment.
4:19	“There were two keys to the advancement of blacks in America – the ballot and the buck. If we organized our political and economic strength, we would have a much easier fight on our hands.”
4:31	Putting this belief into action, Jackie launched business ventures including a clothing store, construction company, and Freedom National Bank, a majority Black owned and operated bank based out of Harlem.
4:45	These ideas and stories only scratch the surface of Robinson’s life, activism, and impact. Dig deeper using primary and secondary sources. Get started with the resources, videos, and documents featured on JRLegacy.org! We can’t wait to see what *you* uncover about Jackie Robinson in your research!