Sports and Social Justice

Sports and athletes are captivating to young people and adults alike. We look up to athletes as our heroes, idols and role models. And yet, sometimes sports provide a negative example: a way *not* to act or behave.

Throughout our nation’s history, athletes have taken stands on issues and made political statements, lent their names to causes they believe in and used their power and platform to speak truth to power. Their words and deeds have influence and impact. As a result, sports inspire teachable moments to talk with young people about identity, diversity, bias and social justice.
Lesson Plans

**LESSON PLAN**

**What is the Soul Cap and Why Was it Rejected for Olympic Use?**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Teach middle school students about why the "Soul Cap" was created especially for Black swimmers and provide an opportunity for students to reflect on the backlash sparked by the decision to ban it in the Olympics.

**LESSON PLAN**

**Major League Baseball and the Negro Leagues: Correcting an Injustice**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL**

In the late 1800's, Black professional baseball players were banned from playing in the major leagues. Teach students about the history of the Negro Leagues, the segregation of Black players and MLB's decision to make some Negro League player statistics part of MLB history.
HIGH SCHOOL

High school students will learn about bills that aim to limit transgender athletes from participating in school sports and reflect on how their own experiences with playing sports and participating in other activities affects them.

LESSON PLAN

Why are States Trying to Ban Transgender Student Athletes?

High school students will learn about bills that aim to limit transgender athletes from participating in school sports and reflect on how their own experiences with playing sports and participating in other activities affects them.

LESSON PLAN

Should Washington's NFL Team Change Their Name?

Ted Eytan | CC BY-SA 2.0
Why is the Washington Redskins' name controversial? Middle and high school students explore and reflect on different perspectives to understand and determine their own points of view.

![Washington Redskins helmet](https://example.com/washington-redskins-helmet.jpg)  
*Keith Allison/CC BY-SA 2.0*

**LESSON PLAN**

**Athletes and Activism**

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Throughout history, athletes have used their power and influence to stand up for social justice. In this lesson plan, students explore different opinions about the role that professional athletes should play in politics and activism.
Using professional basketball player Kyle Korver's essay on racism and white privilege, students explore manifestations of privilege and strategize how to use it to engage in ally behavior.
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teach middle school students about "institutionalized gender discrimination" and the impact of Title IX through the perspective of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team's lawsuit against the U.S Soccer Federation.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Help elementary students understand the language of bias in our lives and ways they can make a difference by exploring letter exchanges between 9-year-old Riley Morrison and NBA player Stephen Curry about the Curry 5's.
LESSON PLAN

Believe in Something: Nike, Kaepernick and Social Change
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn about Nike's decision to feature N.F.L. player Colin Kaepernick in ad and explore and express what they strongly believe in through creative writing.

Colin Kaepernick, via Twitter

LESSON PLAN

Is Olympic Coverage Sexist?
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL
This lesson provides an opportunity for middle and high school students to learn more about the 2016 Olympics, reflect on what they’ve seen and heard and assess the extent to which there is sexism and stereotypes in the coverage of the 2016 Olympics.

Chan-Fan

LESSON PLAN

Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In 2014 Mo'Ne Davis, a 13-year-old girl, made news headlines as the first girl to ever pitch a shutout in the Little League World series. Explore with elementary students gender stereotypes about sports and in other areas of their lives.
In this lesson, students will have an opportunity to learn more about Donald Sterling’s statements, discuss what they would do in certain stakeholder roles and explore the different responses so far.

Zennie Abraham / CC BY-ND 2.0

LESSON PLAN

Responses to Bias: Donald Sterling of the L.A. Clippers

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

In this lesson, students will have an opportunity to learn more about Donald Sterling’s statements, discuss what they would do in certain stakeholder roles and explore the different responses so far.

The Sound of Silence in Football: Derrick Coleman
MIDDLE SCHOOL

In this lesson, students will discuss this inspiring football player, learn more about Derrick Coleman's life and reflect on a story written by a deaf teenager.

AP

LESSON PLAN

Bias, Bullying and Bad Behavior in the NFL

HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the news story about two Miami Dolphins football players in a situation involving bullying and bias, and which resulted in one player leaving the team and the other player's suspension.
The Washington D.C's football team's name continues to spark controversy. Here are tips and strategies for family conversations with young people about mascots, sports team names, slurs and epithets. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Sports, Mascots and Bias**

The Washington D.C's football team's name continues to spark controversy. Here are tips and strategies for family conversations with young people about mascots, sports team names, slurs and epithets. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Kyle Korver, Privilege and Racism**
Kyle Korver, a basketball player with the Utah Jazz, writes an essay about racism and white privilege. Discuss the essay with your youth using our Table Talk parent/family discussion guide. *(Ages 12 and up)*

Women in sports face a wide range of inequalities. Talk with your family about the lawsuit the U.S. women’s soccer team filed against the federation that governs soccer in the U.S., which cites “institutionalized gender discrimination.” *(Ages 10 and up)*
Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.” (Ages 11 and up)

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Nike's Ad and Believing in Something**

Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.” (Ages 11 and up)