

## Non-Fiction Character Interviews



As part of our non-fiction unit, each reader will select one "character" from his or her narrative non-fiction book to interview. For example, you would interview Harriet Tubman if you read a book about Harriet Tubman; you would interview a police dog, or a police man who works with K-9s, if you read a book about the life of a police dog. Since we can't actually speak directly to these "characters," you will be required to draw on all the work you did to get to know this "character," the accomplishments that made him/her/it well-known, and your imagination to respond to the questions.

Below are the minimum requirements for your interviews:

- 250 words, typed or *neatly* hand-written
- A brief summary of your character's life accomplishment (including the name and author of the book you read, who you chose to interview, description of what he/she/it is known for).
- You must use educated "guesses" and your jottings to answer to the interview questions. Each response should be written in complete sentences. Responses to the interview questions must be in the character's voice (not your own!) and reference facts from his/her/its life.

## A Sample Interview:

After reading the book, *Coming Home: A Story of Josh Gibson, Baseball's Greatest Home Run Hitter* by Nanette Mellage, I decided to interview Josh Gibson. Mr. Gibson is famous for his years playing baseball for the Grays team in the Negro League. He played baseball in the time of "the greats," Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth. However, because of segregation, he was not allowed to play on the same league as white men. In September of 1930, Mr. Gibson set the record for farthest hit from home plate of Yankee Stadium. No one else has been able to hit the ball farther than Mr. Gibson.

The following is my interview with Josh Gibson:

*Please state your full name.*

"Josh Gibson"

*Where did you live most of your life?*

"Homestead, Pennsylvania"

*How would you describe yourself?*

"Well, I guess people would call me a decent ball-player. My nick name was 'Thunder,' I had some pretty good hits while I was playin' for the Grays. I'd like to think people would also call me a nice, down-to-earth guy. I don't know, I don't really like talkin' about myself."

*What kinds of things did you struggle with during your life?*

"I'm black, and back in the day when I was playin' ball some people had a real problem with that. They wouldn't let folks like me play in the major-league because of segregation. Segregation meant that blacks and whites had to be separated, not only in schools, restaurants, and buses...but baseball, too. All the black players had to play in the Negro League. Also, I started playin' ball when I was real young. I was only 18 when I joined the Grays. My teammates were at least five years older than I was. I felt a lot of pressure to measure up to the 'greats' that I played with, including Buck Leonard, Satchel Paige, and Smokey Joe Williams."

*Did anything get in the way of your accomplishment or success?*

"I didn't let the color of my skin get in the way of being a good ball-player. Some people got real caught up in that, but I just decided to be the best baseball player that I could be. When we played the New York Lincoln Giants in the Negro League Championship Series we were up against some really talented ball-players. Sometimes I'd listen to the opponent's fans yelling from the stands, sometimes their comments got me down."

*What helped you achieve your success or accomplishment?*

"I tried to be the best ball-player I could be by working out and lifting weights every day, taking care of my body, and being a fierce competitor. My fans helped me keep my spirits up. Anytime I heard 'Thunder's comin'!' from the stands it helped me play harder and stronger."

*What advice would you offer to kids these days?*

"Be the best you can be, don't let the color of your skin determine who you are as a person. Something I'm most proud of is the way I treat other people, I always try to be kind."

Rubric

Category	Description	Point value
Summary of Character's Life	Reader accurately summarizes the character in a way that highlights that character's major accomplishments. The reader correctly records name of book and author, using italics or underlining for the title of a book.	_____/25 pts
Narrative Non-Fiction Reading	The reader used strategies learned in mini-lessons to read narrative non-fiction, including getting to know the 'character,' identifying how that character has changed, what the character learned, and therefore what the reader learned.  The reader recorded his thinking about narrative non-fiction and used those jottings to write the interview.  The reader stopped to ask "What did I learn about this time, person, or group of people?" and learned something about history, science, and the world.	_____/30 pts
Interview Responses	Responses are written in the voice of the character, not the author.  Reader used facts learned from book to back up responses.  Reader used "educated guesses" and imagination to respond.  The reader answered each of the 7 interview questions in complete sentences.	_____/30 pts
Mechanics	The interview is relatively free of grammatical errors.	_____/15 points
Total Score		

Comments: