

Introduction and Teacher's Guide **to Major Taylor curriculum for high school U.S. History classes**

by Arnold Pulda,

Grades 9-12 social studies teacher, University Park Campus School, Worcester, Mass.

Marshall "Major" Taylor: sports hero, world cycling champion, international celebrity, racial paragon. He was born in humble circumstances, rose to the very apex of success and acclaim, died in poverty and obscurity and was buried in a pauper's grave. Major Taylor was a man who lived his life according to the highest standards of athletic, ethical, and religious conduct – yet he was soon forgotten and scarcely honored after he left the scene of his great success. Taylor grew up and lived his life in times of significant change for African-Americans in the United States, yet he stood apart from participating in or even benefitting from those salutary changes. To study his life and accomplishments is uplifting and heartbreaking, and that study will illuminate not only the life of one man and one sport, but also the changes that were occurring in America and abroad at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th.

So let us examine the life and work of Major Taylor and see what we can learn about other events, trends, people, and activities that we know are important, as well: how the races related to each other in the United States after the Civil War and Reconstruction; how blacks began to assert and advocate for their rights after Plessy v. Ferguson; different approaches among black leadership, as represented by Booker T. Washington and W.E. B. DuBois; the place of sports and sports heroes in American society one hundred years ago. As we research among these themes others will present themselves as worthy for further consideration and study.

The study activities presented herein for high-school students are entirely online. A few words here about resources about Major Taylor: the traditional resources (books, articles) are not especially broad or deep; the online resources are far superior. There are two biographies that students might want to consult. The most recent, by Todd Balf, concentrates tightly on Taylor's rivalry with one man, Floyd McFarland. The earlier one, by Andrew Ritchie, has a broader focus. Taylor's own autobiography, which he spent years in writing and much effort in promoting and selling, is out of print but available online via Googlebooks at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015010834771>. It is of some use in trying to understand what made Major Taylor the person he was, and on this site we will quote some relevant and significant passages which will help students toward that perception. The final chapter of the book, "The Value of Good Habits and Clean Living," is posted online at http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/clean_living.shtml. It is well worth reading in order to gain insight to Taylor's attitudes and thinking – and also for his intelligent, clear, eloquent and articulate writing style.

The online resources are excellent. Students will want to begin at <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/media.shtml>, where there are dozens of links to files of all types. Students should simply start and end there, and the teacher will want to give students time to browse among the wide variety of resources available right there before the onset of the activities and

lesson plans included here. Most of the files there are short one-or two-page reports focusing on a single aspect of Major Taylor's life: how he confronted racism on the racing track; his travel to Europe and Australia; his match races against the world's best cyclists; his time living in Worcester; his youth in Indiana – or some other aspect of Taylor's experiences and activities. There are also many short overviews of the man's life, and many of these are worth reading (viewing, listening to) until the student has a confident feel for how Taylor lived and what he accomplished.

Interest in the life and deeds of Major Taylor has broadened within the past years since about 2005, largely due to the work of the people in the Major Taylor Association. The posting of the web site, commissioning and unveiling the statue, re-naming a central boulevard in Worcester in Major Taylor's honor, and various other activities – these have engaged the attention of many individuals and organizations, and now there are many entities interested in the life of Major Taylor. This broadened recent interest is reflected in the diversity of the resources found at the web site and elsewhere; we found ourselves watching a 10-minute audio/video in Dutch (<http://nos.nl/video/7958-portret-wielrenner-major-taylor.html>) which was fascinating despite the fact that we understood only the words "Major" "Taylor" and "Worcester." Students will be similarly drawn to and informed by many of the sites linked here.

Some advice to teachers about pacing with this set of lessons:

1. Give students plenty of time to conduct research in the online sources before the question-and-answer activities commence. There is plenty there, including, as mentioned above, some very engaging audio and video files. Some of those are up to 10 minutes long (although there are also plenty of 2-minute files on YouTube), and you do not want to hurry a student through those. Some of the image files (we used to call them "pictures") are worth contemplating at leisure, as well – especially, to take one example, that gorgeous poster of Taylor in Belgium in 1902 (with Belgian text in the background) (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nostri-imago/2868684335/>) wearing the American flag around his waist – the flag, same or similar, we suppose, that he proudly brandished during his victory lap following his redeeming second match-race victory against Edmond Jacquelin in France. And look at those beautiful murals at the Indianapolis airport, <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/indystar2010feb24.pdf>. You are not going to rush students past that.
2. The first lesson plan is designed for students to introduce themselves to Major Taylor and vice versa. It is straightforward and finite, except for the you-be-the-historian exercise involving issues of accuracy and text literacy with Wikipedia. One class period for that lesson.
3. The second lesson plan is more complex and can require considerably more time, if the teacher desires. She can ask students to deal with one or more of the extended activities according to a schedule and in a format that suits the class: extra credit, presentation, team effort, or as homework. Those activities will require significant research -- time and attention -- beyond class time. The teacher can gauge student interest in the extended work and allow individuals or groups to dig into those subjects which interest them most. Or she can skip over those activities

and have students work on the only the 10 questions which are part of the main body of the lesson. It goes without saying – but here, we are saying it – that this lesson, which deals with the difficult themes of race and prejudice, is a challenging one that will reward broad research and writing about these and related ideas.

4. The third lesson includes a warm-up, taken from other teachers' curriculum posted for middle-school students, about the value of money over time. Let us not have students thinking that earning upwards of \$10,000 per year a hundred years ago was not a ton of money: it was. If your students are conversant with that subject, then skip that activity and lead them right into the sources and the 14 questions contained. That lesson will take more than one class period; you might want to assign the portion that students do not finish in class for homework.
5. Lesson #4: by now students know the subject matter – Who was Major Taylor and what did he do? – pretty well. If they have worked on the previous three lessons, they will know by now which links to go to and which to skip. They will have become, that is – if they are not already – efficient and effective online researchers. So here they can get right into the material and answer the seven questions in one class period. Here is an opportunity for the teacher to challenge students to recall their knowledge, duly assimilated a year or two previous, of World History. Or not.
6. In this final lesson the teacher might want to allow students to stretch their research muscles a little bit, and let them view some excellent videos at their leisure. At the lesson site we have advised teachers to tell (ask?) their local district network administrators well in advance to unblock YouTube and other relevant video sites, and we are repeating that here: you do not want to sit your students down in front of the computers and have them encounter a screen-full of links that they can not get to. The last question here, #14, might be split off for a separate essay, especially if you have observed that this unit, this collection of resources, links, and student activities, to have been a success, to have resonated and engaged your students significantly and strongly. If that is the case, we are pleased beyond measure.
7. Please send us email at info@majortaylorassociation.org and let us know how it went. That is whether you have used one lesson, all five, or something in between. We know that *coverage* of the material is both a challenge and a priority in the U.S. History high-school classroom. We also feel, however, that the life and times of Major Taylor illuminates and informs many related and relevant subjects, so we believe that the teacher and students who even go ahead and spend an entire week with this curriculum will thereby benefit from it. Furthermore, we are eager and anxious to fix what does not work.

Lesson 1 Major Taylor

Subject: U.S. History

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Length: 1 hour

Goal/Rationale: In this activity students will use secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions about the life of one person and the significance of his accomplishments in the context of his time and location.

Prerequisite Knowledge: A basic background in U.S. History, especially the post-Reconstruction period into the 20th century.

Performance objectives:

- Students will engage biographical material and assimilate information about Marshall “Major” Taylor.
- Students will make judgments about accuracy, relevance, fact, and opinion among various biographers and commentators.
- Students will form judgments on racial relations and conflicts in the United States and abroad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Students will consider the place of sports in society.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Under Guiding Principle Three: “Students need to learn of events, ideas, individuals, groups, ideals, dreams, and limitations that have shaped our country and the world;” “In these pursuits, students should study primary and secondary sources, learn to use electronic media and to read and interpret data.”

Under Core Knowledge in United States History (#7 d & e):

Under Study Strands and Learning Standards for History and Social Science (VIII): #3: “**Research, Evidence, and Point of View.** Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence.”

USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans and women to gain basic civil rights. (H)

Materials: Word processor, Internet access. These sites are where students should begin, as it is essential that they have a basic familiarity with the facts of and events in the life of Major Taylor.

URLs of documents:

For many links to vital information about Major Taylor, go to <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/media.shtml>. Most of these are one-page articles focusing on one aspect of Major Taylor's life, accomplishments, and challenges. Among these are videos, audio files, and documents. Scan among these files until you have a good background and working knowledge of the facts, events, and people in Major Taylor's life.

Other relevant sites:

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_Taylor

From Bridgewater State University: <http://www.bridgew.edu/hoba/taylor.cfm>

One man's personal take on the meaning of Major Taylor's life:

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/kifer.htm>

Several articles, written for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, by Lynne Tolman, president of the Major Taylor Association, providing an overview of Taylor's life, challenges, and accomplishments: <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/JimCrow.htm>; <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/whirlwind.htm>; <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/biography.htm>.

Others: <https://sites.google.com/a/mtc3.org/mtc3orgsite/who-was-major-taylor>

<http://www.majortaylorminnesota.org/aboutmt.htm>

At <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/who.shtml>

I the researcher will find several other valuable short articles, all recent.

Procedure:

Initiation: Students will be drawing from their knowledge of United States history during the time of Major Taylor's life, 1878-1932. The teacher will want to make sure that students' knowledge of events, ideas, trends, and people of that period is fresh and active.

Development:

Warm-up activity for students: *You be the historian.* As always, use Wikipedia with caution, keeping in mind that you must check it with other sources for accuracy and authenticity. At the Wikipedia link above for Major Taylor, see if you can find an error. Hint: use what you are reading elsewhere about the chronology and location of Taylor's life. Report at the top of your worksheet as to whether there is an error in the Wikipedia site – and if so, what it is. Then address the following questions:

1. When was Major Taylor born and when did he die?
2. Where was he born and where did he die?
3. Briefly describe the circumstances of his early family life and of his death.
4. Give yourself time and space to answer this question: Taylor did/did not (circle one) lead a normal childhood for a young black man in Indianapolis. Explain your answer, making specific reference to names, events, and locations.
5. Who was Daniel Southard, and how was he important in Marshall Taylor's life?
6. Who was Louis (Birdie) Munger, and how was he important in Taylor's life?
7. How did Taylor get his start in bicycle racing?

8. How did he get the nickname “Major?”
9. When did he move to Worcester?
10. *Why* did he move to Worcester? Give yourself time and space to answer this question.

Closing:

The teacher can take the opportunity in this activity to introduce students to historical biography and the sources involved in researching biography. She can call their attention to questions of accuracy, authorship, legitimacy, and other such issues they will have to confront when dealing with more complex documents.

Assessment Measures:

The teacher can ask for a short essay in which students reflect on the nature and process of researching and reporting on past lives. What sources would they use? How would they determine and judge regarding accuracy in such sources as testimony of witnesses, primary sources, secondary sources, and online materials? Why do historians use various sources, how they account for and filter bias or inaccuracy, and so on. She might ask students to write a short biography of the life of a person whom they know.

Student Evaluation: Here the teacher will look back at the Performance Objectives listed above and reflect on how well the students have met those goals.

Self Evaluation: This is the teacher’s reflection on the lesson, its strengths and weaknesses. What went smoothly? What might have gone more smoothly? What needed better explanation? Who needs more reinforcement? What did you learn from this lesson about your teaching? What might you do differently next time?

Lesson 2 Major Taylor, The Racial Component

Subject: U.S. History

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Length: 1 hour or more.

Goal/Rationale: In this activity students will use secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions about the life of one person and the significance of his accomplishments in the context of his time and location.

Students will be engaging material and addressing queries that are considerably more complex and challenging than the what-where-when questions in the first activity in this series on Major Taylor. Here they will be reading about and making judgments about the racial climate in the United States and abroad 100 years ago: laws, court decisions, policies, practices, activities, responses, strategies, and individuals.

The teacher will want to exercise judgment and render advice as to the length of the activity and the number of resources that students should consult. There are many resources listed, including pictures. At the end of the lesson there are several extended activities, also: if students research and report on any of these, then the duration of the lesson will extend beyond the length of a single class.

Prerequisite Knowledge: A basic background in U.S. History, especially the post-Reconstruction period into the 20th century.

Performance objectives:

- Students will engage biographical material and assimilate information about Marshall “Major” Taylor.
- Students will research and report on primary and secondary sources regarding relations among the races in 19th- and 20th-century America, Europe, and Australia.
- Students will make judgments about accuracy, relevance, fact, and opinion among various biographers and commentators.
- Students will form judgments on racial relations and conflicts in the United States and abroad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Students will consider the place of sports in society.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Under Guiding Principle Three: “Students need to learn of events, ideas, individuals, groups, ideals, dreams, and limitations that have shaped our country and the world;” “In these pursuits, students should study primary and secondary sources, learn to use electronic media and to read and interpret data.”

Under Core Knowledge in United States History (#7 d & e):
Under Study Strands and Learning Standards for History and Social Science (VIII): #3:
“**Research, Evidence, and Point of View.** Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence.”
USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans and women to gain basic civil rights. (H)

Materials: Word processor, Internet access. Research the 1896 Supreme Court decision Plessy v. Ferguson. You can start with a good one-page summary, at http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_plessy.html and http://www.lawbuzz.com/can_you/plessy/plessy.htm. Familiarize yourself with the basic facts of the case, the important terms, the majority opinion, and Justice Harlan’s dissenting opinion.

Research the history of Jim Crow laws and practices. For an introduction to the origin of the term Jim Crow, see <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/who.htm>. For a brief overview, along with some excellent audio files, go to <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/remembering/bitter.html>. For a more in-depth history of Jim Crow – its origins, practice, and history, see <http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/history/creating2.htm>.

Use the following images, also:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:WhiteDoorColoredDoor.jpg>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BilliardHallForColored.jpg>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:WhiteTradeOnlyLancasterOhio.jpg>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:JimCrowInDurhamNC.jpg>
- <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@filreq%28@field%28NUMBER+@band%28fsa+8a26761%29%29+@field%28COLLID+fsa%29%29:displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf>
- <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@filreq%28@field%28NUMBER+@band%28fsa+8a41115%29%29+@field%28COLLID+fsa%29%29:displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:JimCrowCar2.jpg>

Consult also the materials listed for Lesson 1, on the life of Major Taylor.

Procedure:

Initiation: Students will be drawing from their knowledge of United States history during the time of Major Taylor’s life, 1878-1932. The teacher will want to make sure that students’ knowledge of events, ideas, trends, and people of that period is fresh and active.

Development:

1. Define Jim Crow. Be specific. Were these laws, policies, and/or practices? Some combination thereof? Formal, informal? Legal, illegal? Written, unwritten?
2. Define racial discrimination, prejudice. As above: written, formal, laws, legal – or otherwise?
3. Distinguish between #1 and #2, above.
4. *Where* did Jim Crow apply and was practiced? What states, municipalities, other?
5. *When* did Jim Crow apply and was practiced?
6. How do you relate Plessy v. Ferguson to Jim Crow? Provide your answer in a short paragraph.
7. Was Major Taylor specifically and individually affected by Jim Crow? How, where, and when? Be specific.
8. Was Major Taylor specifically and individually affected by race prejudice and discrimination? Explain your answer, citing specific instances to support *both* positions.
9. How was the racial situation different in Worcester than in Indianapolis? Look for Taylor's testimony that begins with "I was in Worcester only a short time..." to help you in your answer. After your short answer regarding "better" or "worse," explain your reasoning by reference to specific reasons ***why*** Worcester and Indianapolis, both cities in the northern section of the U.S., differed considerably in the way they received and treated black citizens.
10. In 1897 a shocking event occurred only 60 miles away from Worcester, in Taunton, MA, after a race there. Read about it in the curriculum guide, <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/curric2005.pdf>, under "News and Public Opinion." After reading about this event, have you reconsidered your opinion about the tolerance of Massachusetts communities toward black athletes? Explain your answer.

Extended activity, research, and reporting: Booker T. Washington and W.E. B. DuBois.

In the time of Major Taylor's life, two men stood out as leaders among blacks nationally, and as advocates for the advancement of blacks through education: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Their approaches to how and why to educate blacks

were considerably divergent, however. For Booker T. vs. W.E.B.: Booker T. Washington, INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION IS THE SOLUTION, 1896

<http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1147.htm>

W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," from THE NEGRO PROBLEM: A SERIES OF ARTICLES BY REPRESENTATIVE NEGROES OF TO-DAY (New York, 1903), [excerpts]

<http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1148.htm>. During the Jim Crow era, many African Americans struggled to define the purpose of education. Booker T. Washington stressed vocational over cultural education, stating that "there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." On the other hand, W.E.B. Du Bois insisted that "the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men." See http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/education_lesson2_steps.html for more on this. On Du Bois and the Paris Exhibition:

http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/lessonplans/hs_lp_parisexpo.htm.

Du Bois wrote of what he called "twoness:"

"After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in the American world – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring souls, two warring ideals in dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

We know that Marshall Taylor lived with a wealthy white family in Indianapolis, the Southards, from age 8 to 12. According to Andrew Ritchie, one of his biographers: "At a very early age, then, Marshall Taylor, the black farm boy who had graduated to the status of companion to the son of a wealthy white family, had his feet planted in two different worlds, but belonged totally in neither. He gained confidence in dealing with the white world, while learning to respect and defer to it. At the same time he was distancing himself from the farm, his family, and his roots."

1. Given Du Bois' definition of "twoness" and the account by Ritchie of Taylor's formative years, comment on the development of Taylor as a young man. Does this "twoness" fairly characterize Taylor? Explain your answer in essay format.

Extended activity, research, and reporting: Major Taylor and politics. *You be the analyst, you be the historian:*

According to his biographer Andrew Ritchie (p. 226), "Politically, Major Taylor was conservative." He goes on: "According to his daughter, he had some contact with famous black American leaders, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey, as well as other well-known black personalities and friends from his

bicycle racing days, who often visited him in Worcester.” But “Taylor was never politically engaged, never attended political meetings, belonged to no political organizations and espoused no political causes. Although he may have sympathized with the progressive ideas of his black friends, it appears that he was unwilling to get involved in the causes.”

Taylor’s other biographer, Todd Balf, concentrates closely on the man’s cycling career and accomplishments. As regards Taylor’s political views and activities, he says two things:

(p. 121-22) Taylor “had found the business of living in a white world exhausting. Being a recognized black celebrity was difficult, too. A chasm was widening between the nation’s foremost black leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. The former advocated patience, hard work, and vocational education – paying one’s dues to show the white man, compel him to recognize, that one was worthy. Du Bois saw black advancement in a different light. Colored-only staircases, ticket booths, bathrooms, and drinking fountains added up to less than a whole existence, Du Bois argued. The black man wasn’t being treated as equal and wouldn’t be until he demanded equal rights. A half manhood was unacceptable; a period of proving was a degradation.”

Balf also writes (p. 129-30) that as a young adult Taylor followed the events and reporting on black issues carefully. But in a case when some egregiously non-scientific pseudo-medical studies confirming black mental inferiority were published, Taylor chose “not to waste his breath or chance his career with a hard rebuttal. But privately Taylor continued striking out, searching, and educating himself more diligently than ever.” Further: “He clipped and saved an article about the crusading black activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett and her refusal to ride a service elevator at Chicago’s luxury Palmer hotel. The activists speaking out, the [black] soldiers returning [from exemplary service in the Spanish-American War], the all-black pace team he was assembling, and the swaying church people who regularly surrounded him – they were all reminders that he was not alone.”

1. Does the biographer, Ritchie, mean that Du Bois, Washington and Garvey visited Taylor, or that his bicycle-racing friends visited him? Explain your answer and indicate how the distinction is significant.
2. Summarize the argument of Balf, the second biographer, toward Taylor’s political and racial position.
3. In essay format, explain your own opinion regarding Taylor’s politics and activities (or lack thereof) in advocating for equal rights for African-Americans.

Extended activity, research, and reporting: You are the historian.

Of considerable interest and some controversy is the story of Major Taylor trying to lighten the color of his skin. According to one biographer, Todd Balf (p. 44-45), Taylor and Birdie Munger

“attempted to bleach his skin white. The specific solution they used is unknown, though the Indianapolis black newspaper the *Freeman* was then running ads for ‘black skin remover.’ The Virginia doctor who invented the product promised results in forty-eight hours. ‘For days and days we poured it on the lad,’ related Munger in a newspaper story. ‘His hair turned a sort of red and his skin did seem to be turning whiter and whiter....[but] the mixture was poisonous in the extreme and we had to stop it.”

Another biographer, Andrew Ritchie, did not include this incident in his book. See Lynne Tolman’s article,

<http://www.readex.com/readex-report/cycling-champion-major-taylor-and-african-american-press>

(about three-fourths of the way down the page, beginning with “The strata of black society” above an image of an advertisement for “black skin remover”). Ritchie seems less inclined than Balf to believe that a skin-bleaching attempt on Major Taylor occurred. What do you think? Explain your answer and suggest another version or interpretation if necessary.

Closing:

The teacher can take the opportunity in this activity to introduce students to the difficult task that historians face when they combine biography with complex subjects such as race relations. She can call students’ attention to questions of accuracy, authorship, legitimacy, and other such issues they will have to confront when dealing with complex documents or in cases where historians render conflicting reports.

Assessment Measures:

For this activity the teacher might want students to work in teams of 3 or 4. There are many sources, and students can divide the sources and assign tasks. From the team effort the teacher might want to see a presentation of some sort.

For the extended activities, essay responses are suggested. The teacher will use the format that is preferred in the school, such as the 5-paragraph persuasive essay.

Student Evaluation: Here the teacher will look back at the Performance Objectives listed above and reflect on how well the students have met those goals.

Self Evaluation: This is the teacher’s reflection on the lesson, its strengths and weaknesses. What went smoothly? What might have gone more smoothly? What needed better explanation? Who needs more reinforcement? What did you learn from this lesson about your teaching? What might you do differently next time?

Lesson 3 Major Taylor, The Adult Man

Subject: U.S. History

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Length: 1-2 hours; multiple class periods

Goal/Rationale: In this activity students will use secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions about the life of one person and the significance of his accomplishments in the context of his time and location.

Prerequisite Knowledge: A basic background in U.S. History, especially the post-Reconstruction period into the 20th century.

Performance objectives:

- Students will engage biographical material and assimilate information about Marshall “Major” Taylor.
- Students will make judgments about accuracy, relevance, fact, and opinion among various biographers and commentators.
- Students will form judgments on racial relations and conflicts in the United States and abroad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Students will consider the place of sports in society.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Under Guiding Principle Three: “Students need to learn of events, ideas, individuals, groups, ideals, dreams, and limitations that have shaped our country and the world;” “In these pursuits, students should study primary and secondary sources, learn to use electronic media and to read and interpret data.”

Under Core Knowledge in United States History (#7 d & e):

Under Study Strands and Learning Standards for History and Social Science (VIII): #3: “**Research, Evidence, and Point of View.** Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence.”

USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans and women to gain basic civil rights. (H)

Materials: Word processor, Internet access. These sites are where students should begin, as it is essential that they have a basic familiarity with the facts of and events in the life of Major Taylor.

For many links to vital information about Major Taylor, go to <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/media.shtml>. Most of these are one-page articles focusing on one aspect of Major Taylor's life, accomplishments, and challenges. Among these are videos, audio files, and documents. Scan among these files until you have a good background and working knowledge of the facts, events, and people in Major Taylor's life.

Other relevant sites:

From Bridgewater State University: <http://www.bridgew.edu/hoba/taylor.cfm>

One man's personal take on the meaning of Major Taylor's life:

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/kifer.htm>

Several articles, written for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, by Lynne Tolman, now president of the Major Taylor Association, providing an overview of Taylor's life, challenges, and accomplishments:

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/JimCrow.htm>;

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/whirlwind.htm>;

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/biography.htm>.

Others:

<https://sites.google.com/a/mtc3.org/mtc3orgsite/who-was-major-taylor>.

<http://www.majortaylorminnesota.org/aboutmt.htm>.

At <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/who.shtml> the researcher will find several additional valuable short articles, all recent.

"The Value of Good Habits and Clean Living" (the final chapter of Taylor's autobiography is at http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/clean_living.shtml)

Procedure:

Initiation: Students will be drawing from their knowledge of United States history during the time of Major Taylor's life, 1878-1932. The teacher will want to make sure that students' knowledge of events, ideas, trends, and people of that period is fresh and active.

Warm-up:

In the curriculum for grades 6-8 at <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/curric2005.pdf> there are questions and information how to compare prices and values from previous times – in this case, about 100 years ago – and today's prices. Students: be certain to visit the web sites there and answer the questions included so that you are aware of how inflation has changed values and spending. It is important that you have a context for understanding your grandmother when she says, "I paid a quarter to go to the movies when I was your age." Likewise, it is important that you understand, when you read that Major Taylor earned as much as \$50,000 in some years, how much that would be in today's dollars.

Development:

1. Taylor refused to race on Sundays. Why?

2. After reading the final chapter of Taylor’s autobiography, “The Value of Good Habits and Clean Living,” (http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/clean_living.shtml) characterize Taylor’s tone and attitude? Do you find him sincere? Otherwise? Sanctimonious? Otherwise? What other adjectives would you use to describe him?
3. <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/neighborhood.htm> and <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/whirlwind.htm>. The following questions #4-7 pertain to the information about the house on Hobson Street in Worcester:
 4. In one paragraph describe the process by which Taylor managed to purchase a house in an all-white neighborhood.
 5. Why did the neighbors offer to buy the house back, and for how much money?
 6. What did Taylor do in response to the offer?
 7. What would you have done – first, in the case of the neighbors, and second, if you had been Taylor? Explain.
 8. How old was Major Taylor when he retired from bicycle racing? How does that compare with the age at which other prominent athletes have retired? Be specific with your answer.
 9. Does it seem that Taylor prepared for his life after retirement carefully and properly? Be specific with references to his actions, savings, assets, talents, and plans.
 10. In what year and at what age did Major Taylor die? Where, and under what circumstances?
 11. How would you characterize the last 22 years of Taylor’s life after his retirement? Reply here in one paragraph.
 12. What specific incidents or events contributed to how Taylor lived his life after retirement?
 13. What significant event occurred 16 years after Taylor died? Where, what, and who? See <http://www.myspace.com/566953926/music/songs/major-taylors-grave-m4a-81547856> and <http://www.sln.org/pieces/silverman/taylorbook/taylor15.htm>.
 14. What significant events have occurred in more recent times to honor and commemorate the life and accomplishments of Major Taylor? As above: where, what, and who?

Closing:

The teacher can take the opportunity in this activity to introduce students to historical biography and the sources involved in researching biography. She can call their attention to questions of accuracy, authorship, legitimacy, and other such issues they will have to confront when dealing with more complex documents.

Assessment Measures:

Individual work might work best for students with this material. By now they should be experts on the life and times of Major Taylor, and the teacher might want to reward them for their research and hard work at this point by applying an objective test that

contains a few short questions about the man's life and an essay about his times and the challenges he faced.

Student Evaluation: Here the teacher will look back at the Performance Objectives listed above and reflect on how well the students have met those goals.

Self Evaluation: This is the teacher's reflection on the lesson, its strengths and weaknesses. What went smoothly? What might have gone more smoothly? What needed better explanation? Who needs more reinforcement? What did you learn from this lesson about your teaching? What might you do differently next time?

Lesson 4
“How the great thronq did roar” -- Major Taylor Abroad

Subject: U.S. History

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Length: 1 hour

Goal/Rationale: In this activity students will use secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions about the life of one person and the significance of his accomplishments in the context of his time and location.

Prerequisite Knowledge: A basic background in U.S. History, especially the post-Reconstruction period into the 20th century. Students should also take some time to recall their 9th-grade curriculum re: Modern World History.

Performance objectives:

- Students will engage biographical material and assimilate information about Marshall “Major” Taylor.
- Students will make judgments about accuracy, relevance, fact, and opinion among various biographers and commentators.
- Students will form judgments on racial relations and conflicts in the United States and abroad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Students will compare the status of race relations on different continents and form conclusions as to the causes of those differences.
- Students will consider the place of sports in society, in the United States, Europe, and Australia.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Under Guiding Principle Three: “Students need to learn of events, ideas, individuals, groups, ideals, dreams, and limitations that have shaped our country and the world;” “In these pursuits, students should study primary and secondary sources, learn to use electronic media and to read and interpret data.”

Under Core Knowledge in United States History (#7 d & e):

Under Study Strands and Learning Standards for History and Social Science (VIII): #3: “**Research, Evidence, and Point of View.** Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence.”

USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans and women to gain basic civil rights. (H)

Materials: Word processor, Internet access. These sites are where students should begin, as it is essential that they have a basic familiarity with the facts of and events in the life of Major Taylor.

For many links to vital information about Major Taylor, go to <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/media.shtml>. Most of these are one-page articles focusing on one aspect of Major Taylor's life, accomplishments, and challenges. Among these are videos, audio files, and documents. Scan among these files until you have a good background and working knowledge of the facts, events, and people in Major Taylor's life.

Other relevant sites:

From Bridgewater State University: <http://www.bridgew.edu/hoba/taylor.cfm>

One man's personal take on the meaning of Major Taylor's life:

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/kifer.htm>

Several articles, written for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, by Lynne Tolman, President of the Major Taylor Association, providing an overview of Taylor's life, challenges, and accomplishments: <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/JimCrow.htm>;

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/whirlwind.htm>;

<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/biography.htm>.

Others: <https://sites.google.com/a/mtc3.org/mtc3orgsite/who-was-major-taylor>.

<http://www.majortaylorminnesota.org/aboutmt.htm>.

At <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/who.shtml> the researcher will find several other valuable short articles, all recent.

View this poster of Major Taylor in Belgium in 1902, "showing the flag:"

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nostri-imago/2868684335/>

Procedure:

Initiation: Students will be drawing from their knowledge of United States and World history during the time of Major Taylor's life, 1878-1932. The teacher will want to make sure that students' knowledge of events, ideas, trends, and people of that period is fresh and active.

Development:

1. When did Major Taylor first travel abroad, and to where?
2. How was he received there – explain your answer in several sentences.
3. From resources listed here and your own knowledge of U.S. and World History, explain, in a paragraph or two, how to account for the difference in how Major Taylor was received outside the U.S. as compared to his challenges in the United States.

4. How did he perform there in his bicycle competitions on his trips to Europe? Explain.
5. <http://www.majortaylor.com/page32.html> Despite Taylor's success in Europe, there was a sour note that left a lasting impression: after the French cycling champion, Edmond Jacquelin, beat Taylor in an early match race, Jacquelin rode a lap around the track thumbing his nose toward the crowd, belittling Taylor. Knowing the character and behavior of Taylor, now, as well as you do: when Taylor defeated Jacquelin only a couple of weeks later, how do you think he reacted?
6. To what other country outside of Europe did Taylor journey for bicycle competition? As above: how was he received there, and how did he fare in competition?
7. This second country to which he journeyed abroad had just recently passed legislation which discriminated against non-white "objectionable" immigrants and races, including American blacks. As in question #3, above, from your knowledge of World History, how do you explain Taylor's reception in that country *despite* such legislation?

Closing:

The teacher can take the opportunity in this activity to expand on comparative history – how different countries developed in their racial history, attitudes, policies, and practices.

Assessment Measures:

It seems that grouping students will work most effectively in this activity. The teacher might ask students to represent, respectively, the United States, several European countries, and Australia – how they received Major Taylor, how Taylor perceived each different location, and other relevant factors that help illuminate a compare-and-contrast exercise.

Student Evaluation: Here the teacher will look back at the Performance Objectives listed above and reflect on how well the students have met those goals.

Self Evaluation: This is the teacher's reflection on the lesson, its strengths and weaknesses. What went smoothly? What might have gone more smoothly? What needed better explanation? Who needs more reinforcement? What did you learn from this lesson about your teaching? What might you do differently next time?

Lesson 5
Major Taylor and the Sport, on the Bicycle

Subject: U.S. History

Grade Level: 9-12

Class Length: 1-2 hours; multiple class periods

Goal/Rationale: In this activity students will use secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions about the life of one person competing in one sport, and the significance of his accomplishments in the context of his time and location.

Prerequisite Knowledge: A basic background in U.S. History, especially the post-Reconstruction period into the 20th century.

Performance objectives:

- Students will engage biographical material and assimilate information about Marshall “Major” Taylor.
- Students will make judgments about accuracy, relevance, fact, and opinion among various biographers and commentators.
- Students will form judgments on racial relations and conflicts in the United States and abroad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Students will draw conclusions regarding the influence of one man on a sport – whether and how he changed that sport.
- Students will consider the place of sports in society.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Under Guiding Principle Three: “Students need to learn of events, ideas, individuals, groups, ideals, dreams, and limitations that have shaped our country and the world;” “In these pursuits, students should study primary and secondary sources, learn to use electronic media and to read and interpret data.”

Under Core Knowledge in United States History (#7 d & e):

Under Study Strands and Learning Standards for History and Social Science (VIII): #3: **“Research, Evidence, and Point of View.** Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence.”

USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans and women to gain basic civil rights. (H)

Materials: Word processor, Internet access. Students should use web sites provided in the other units of this series, as well as those following, which treat with the details and tactics of bicycle-racing:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12DSm9g0H_U&feature=related (3:09)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMm9iluwmy8&NR=1> (2:20)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFNpBdlpj9Y&feature=related> (4:03)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHuFFL0478Q&feature=related> (9:08)

http://www.theracingbicycle.com/Early_History.html

<http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html>

(at that site, compare the high-wheel bicycle with the pneumatic-tired “safety” bike)

Sprinting tactics: [to the teacher: if YouTube is blocked on the school network, call and email your web administrators in advance with a request to unblock the entire site or these specific videos for the duration of the lessons:]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LyV9qOCTkU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmTMuaWojNE&feature=relmfu>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmTMuaWojNE&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-ia1pN46Aw>

Watch the following 5-minute video to see what an indoor wood-track velodrome looks like, with its tight corners and high-banked turns. Also observe the finish of the race by modern riders using tactics that were pioneered and perfected by Major Taylor over 100 years ago:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tac-o4H1XhQ>

How modern pacing looks:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsApGI3vtmc&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol3qWekkYtl&feature=related>

shows match-race tactics: stalling, positioning, etc. And this, with a photo finish:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWHjq7iBp98&feature=related>

(need to watch only to the 2:00 mark), and this:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9KvkTBQ-Tk&feature=related>

For several other videos of bicycle competition

For a picture of Taylor’s bike, go to

<http://velocitynation.com/content/interviews/2006/lynne-tolman-major-taylor-association>

Procedure:

Initiation: Students will be drawing from their knowledge of United States history during the time of Major Taylor’s life, 1878-1932. The teacher will want to make sure that students’ knowledge of events, ideas, trends, and people of that period is fresh and active.

Development:

1. Taylor’s first race was a distance race, and soon after he competed in a 6-day competition. How many miles did he cover in the 6 days? Describe, in a couple of sentences, his racing strategy and procedure.

2. Taylor soon came to prefer another type of racing, in which tactics, not pure speed or endurance, was most important. What kind of racing was that? Briefly describe it.
3. What was a match race? Describe different types of match races – paced, unpaced, standing start, flying start, handicapped.
4. What records did Taylor set, for what distances? How do those compare for modern records? How fast was he going, in mph?
5. Did Taylor's bicycle look like modern racing bicycles? How similar, how different? Comment also on other significant features of bicycles 100 years ago: materials used in the frame, types of tires, weight, brakes, gearing, etc. Be thorough and specific.
6. In short races Major Taylor was known for his devastating "jump," or sudden acceleration and sprint near the end of the race. Is that tactic still used in velodrome racing?
7. The bicycles of Taylor's time had no coasting capability. They were, in fact, geared so that they could be pedaled backward. In a key match race Taylor pedaled his bicycle backward in order to maximize his position versus his opponent. Modern racing bicycles do have coasting capability, and cannot be pedaled backward. Which would you prefer as a sprint racer on the track, and why?
8. Given the above facts, do you think that Major Taylor would prefer a modern racing bicycle or his own equipment if he were living and racing now? Explain.
9. One side of the monument sculpture in Worcester shows 3 bicycle racers in competition. At what stage of the race do you think they are at the moment frozen in time? Explain.
<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/news/Traces-Winter2008.pdf>
10. Which of the three riders do you think is Major Taylor? Explain your answer. After you draw your conclusion. To confirm your answer go to
<http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/bikeculture-coverstory-May2007.pdf>
11. According to this article from 2009, modern bicycle competition is, as it was before the advent of Major Taylor, largely a whites-only activity:
<http://vannevar.blogspot.com/2009/07/major-taylor-tour-de-france-racism.html>
Why does the author of this article think it is so?

12. For an opposing point of view, see

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/cycling/2675597/Two-African-cyclists-ready-to-dominate-the-Tour-de-France-podium-Cycling.html> and <http://theblackissue.blogspot.com/2008/08/next-jackie-robinson-may-be-named.html>

13. Do you agree with the author in question #11? Do you think that there are other factors at work that operate to minimize the participation of blacks in cycling? Explain your answer. [Do not forget to read the Comments below the article.]

14. How would you describe the lasting influence of Major Taylor on the sport of competitive cycling? Include, in your thinking and composing, what you have read and learned about the man, the United States, Europe and Australia at the time that he lived and competed; the differing viewpoints about African-American life in the United States as represented by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois; Major Taylor as an athlete and competitive cyclist – and any other aspect of Major Taylor’s life and times that you deem important and significant.

Closing:

The teacher can take the opportunity in this activity to introduce students to historical biography and the sources involved in researching biography. She can call their attention to questions of accuracy, authorship, legitimacy, and other such issues they will have to confront when dealing with more complex documents.

Assessment Measures:

The teacher can choose between group or individual work for this unit, or perhaps a combination.

Student Evaluation: Here the teacher will look back at the Performance Objectives listed above and reflect on how well the students have met those goals.

Self Evaluation: This is the teacher’s reflection on the lesson, its strengths and weaknesses. What went smoothly? What might have gone more smoothly? What needed better explanation? Who needs more reinforcement? What did you learn from this lesson about your teaching? What might you do differently next time?