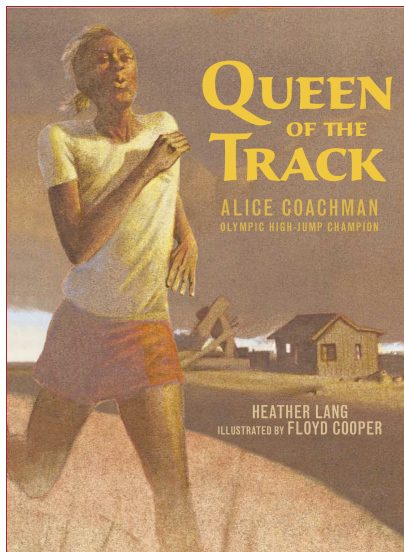


QUEEN OF THE TRACK

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY GUIDE

Developed by Heather Lang with Kate Narita,
teacher at Ashland Middle School in Ashland, MA



40 pages • Ages 5 and up
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At the 1948 Olympics in London, members of the U.S. Women's Track and Field team went down to defeat one by one. Any hope of winning rested on Alice Coachman. Thousands of spectators stayed late for the high-jump finals and witnessed history as she became the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal.

This book follows Alice Coachman on her journey from rural Georgia, where she overcame adversity both as a woman and a black athlete, to her triumph at Wembley Stadium.

You can learn more about QUEEN OF THE TRACK and Alice Coachman at heatherlangbooks.com.

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About the Author: Heather Lang



“It’s my wish that every young person read this inspiring book.”
-Jackie Joyner-Kersey,
Olympic gold medalist

Heather Lang first started writing in fourth grade after she read *HARRIET THE SPY* by Louise Fitzhugh. For years she kept a top-secret journal, just like Harriet. At Duke University, she loved researching and solving mysteries in her science classes and earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Later she put her passion for research and writing to use as a public health attorney. Heather now writes fiction and nonfiction for children. She is especially drawn to nonfiction stories about men and women who overcame great obstacles and fought for their dreams. She is a volunteer and guest writer for the National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance’s website, ourwhitehouse.org. *QUEEN OF THE TRACK* is her first children’s book.

When she is not writing, Heather is busy with her four children. She loves sports, taking art classes with her daughters, and going on family adventures. You can learn more about Heather on her website at heatherlangbooks.com.

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Grades 2-3

Before You Read Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about the cover?
2. What makes you say that?
3. Would someone please read the title? What is a track?
-Write all the students' ideas on the board
4. Who do you think the queen is?
-Have students do a think, pair, share and write their answers on the board.

While You Read Discussion Questions

1. While looking at the title page, ask students what additional information the illustration provides them?
-Note their observations on the board.
2. What did Alice like to do?
3. Let's make a text-to-self connection. Raise your hand if you like to run and jump.
4. Why did her father punish her?
5. Could Alice go anywhere she wanted? Why not?
6. How do you know Alice was poor?
7. What was different for Alice when she rode buses in England versus when she road buses back home in the United States?
8. Why did Alice win the Olympic gold even though the other woman also cleared the 5 feet 6 1/8 inches high jump?
9. Who shook Alice's hand?

After You Read Discussion Questions

1. Does anyone know what the word segregation means?
-Define segregation: to force one group of people to stay away from another group of people based on people's religious beliefs, skin color, or gender.
2. Ask students to think, pair, share the different types of segregation that Alice Coachman overcame to achieve her goal.
3. What obstacles have you overcome to achieve your goals?

Grades 4-5

Before You Read Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about the cover?
2. What makes you say that?
3. Based on the cover and the title, what predictions can you make about the book?
-Have students write three predictions in their notebooks

While You Read Discussion Questions

1. After showing students the title page, ask them if they'd like to revise or add to the predictions they wrote in their notebooks.
2. Alice and her father had different opinions about whether or not Alice should run and jump. Make a text-to-self connection about a time you had a different opinion than your parents.
3. What kinds of discrimination did Alice face?
4. How were African Americans segregated from people of European descent?
5. How did Alice use her running skills to help other people?
6. How did poverty affect Alice's life?
7. Was life different for Alice in England? Explain why or why not.
8. Who shook Alice's hand after she won the gold medal?
9. Did the state of Georgia honor her upon her return to the South? Explain why or why not.

After You Read Discussion Questions

1. What obstacles did Alice overcome to achieve her goals?
2. Make a text-to-self connection and tell about a time you overcame obstacles to reach your goals.
3. Have you ever been discriminated against based on your age, your gender, the color of your skin, or your religion? If so, explain why. If not, explain why you don't think you've ever experienced discrimination.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Comprehension Questions (Grades 2-3)

Read each question and write your answers in complete sentences. Each question is worth two points. You will earn a point for the correct answer and a point for correct capitalization and punctuation.

1. What was Alice Coachman born to do?

2. Did her father want her to do this? Explain why or why not.

3. Do you think Alice should have listened to her father? Explain why or why not.

4. What did Alice Coachman do on August 7, 1948?

5. If you could win any Olympic event, which one would it be and why?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

True or False

Read each statement below. Write a "T" for true next to each correct statement. Write an "F" for false next to each incorrect statement.

1. Alice could sit wherever she wanted on the buses in the South. _____
2. Alice was a good basketball player. _____
3. Alice's family was rich. They paid for her to go to college _____
4. Alice participated in the 1944 Olympic Games. _____
5. During the 1948 Olympics, when the bar was at 5 feet 6 1/8 inches, Dorothy Tyler cleared the bar on her second try. _____

Vocabulary Cloze Activity

Write the **bolded** word that best completes each sentence in the blank.

achieve **admired** **attempt** **train** **voyage**

1. People _____ Alice Coachman's speed when she delivered hot meals to people after the tornado.
2. Since Alice Coachman could not _____ in gyms or parks because of the color of her skin, she ran and jumped wherever she could.
3. Dorothy Tyler failed her first _____ to clear the bar when it was set at 5 feet 6 1/8 inches.
4. Alice Coachman overcame many obstacles to _____ her dream and win an Olympic gold medal.
5. Alice Coachman's _____ across the Atlantic Ocean took seven days.

Comprehension, True or False, Vocabulary Cloze Answers Grades 2-3

Comprehension Question Answers

1. Alice Coachman was born to run and jump.
2. Her father did not want her to run and jump because it wasn't considered ladylike.
3. Answers will vary.
4. On August 7, 1948 Alice Coachman became the first African-American woman to win an Olympic gold medal.
5. Answers will vary.

True or False Answers

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True

Vocabulary Cloze Answers

1. admired
2. train
3. attempt
4. achieve
5. voyage

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Comprehension Questions (Grades 4-5)

Read each question and write your answers in complete sentences. Each question is worth two points. You will earn a point for the correct answer and a point for correct capitalization and punctuation.

1. What types of discrimination did Alice Coachman face?

2. How were Alice Coachman and other African Americans segregated from people of European descent in the South?

3. Did the state of Georgia honor Alice Coachman when she returned from the 1948 Olympic Games. Explain why or why not.

4. If you could compete in any Olympic event, which one would it be? Explain why this would be the best Olympic event for you.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Multiple Choice Questions

Read each question and circle the correct answer. You may only circle one answer.

1. Which of the activities did Alice Coachman do each day?
 - a. Get up early to cook
 - b. Pick cotton and peaches
 - c. Run and jump
 - d. All of the above

2. Which of these sports did Alice Coachman excel in?
 - a. Track and soccer
 - b. Track and basketball
 - c. Basketball and soccer
 - d. None of the above

3. During Alice's childhood, how were African Americans segregated from people of European descent in the South?
 - a. African Americans couldn't sit in the front of the bus.
 - b. African Americans couldn't train at the same parks and gymnasiums.
 - c. African Americans couldn't go to the same schools as white people.
 - d. All of the above

4. Why didn't Alice Coachman compete in the 1944 Olympic Games?
 - a. The games were cancelled because of The Civil War.
 - b. The games were cancelled because of World War I.
 - c. The games were cancelled because of World War II.
 - d. None of the above

5. Which of these people shook Alice Coachman's hand after she won an Olympic gold medal in 1948?
 - a. The king of England
 - b. A mayor in Georgia
 - c. The queen of England
 - d. All of the above

6. Which of the following statements is true about the 1948 Olympic Games?
 - a. The committee transformed a former dog-racing track into the main stadium.
 - b. The ice rink became the swimming pool.
 - c. Many athletes made their own uniforms.
 - d. All of the above

Comprehension and Multiple Choice Answers

Grades 4-5

Comprehension Question Answers

1. Alice Coachman faced gender and racial discrimination.
2. In the South, African Americans were segregated from people of European descent in many ways. African Americans could not attend the same schools, use the same bathrooms, frequent the same parks or tracks, drink from the same water fountains, or sit in the front of public buses.
3. Georgia did give a parade that stretched for 175 miles, but she still faced segregation. She wasn't allowed to speak to the crowd, whites sat apart from blacks in the auditorium, and the mayor refused to shake her hand.
4. Answers will vary.

Multiple Choice Answers

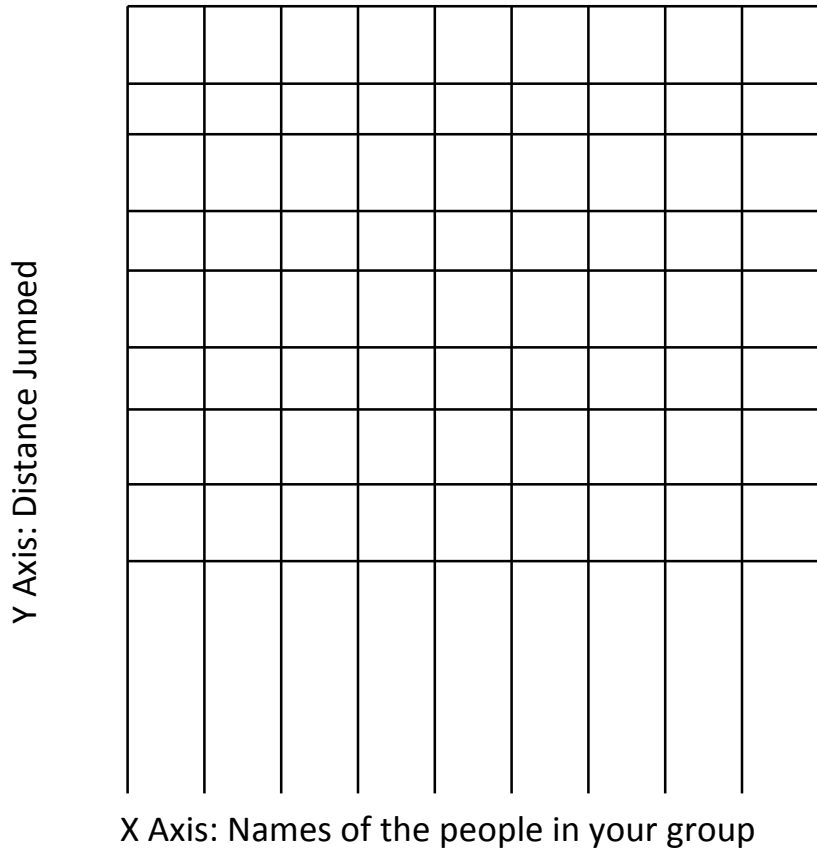
1. D-All of the above
2. B-Track and basketball
3. D-All of the above
4. C-The games were cancelled because of World War II.
5. A-The king of England
6. D-All of the above

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

LONG JUMP GRAPH

Directions: One-by-one each person in your group should line up with his or her toes on the tape. Then, she should jump as far as she can. Another person in the group should mark how far she jumped while a different person measures the distance jumped. Repeat this process until everyone has had a chance to jump. Then, answer the questions below.

Title: Our Group's Long Jump Graph



1. Who jumped the longest distance? _____
2. Who jumped the shortest distance? _____
3. Did anyone jump the exact same distance as another person? _____
4. Write the names of people in order from the shortest to the longest jump.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

LONG JUMP GRAPH DATA SET

Directions: Use the data from your group's long jump graph to answer the questions below. Use the math term definitions to help you calculate each answer.

Math Term Definitions

Maximum-The highest number in a data set.

Mean-The average of all the numbers in a data set.

Median-The number in the middle of an ordered data set.

Minimum-The lowest number in a data set.

Mode-The number that occurs most often in a data set.

Range-The numbers between the maximum and the minimum (Hint: Subtract the minimum from the maximum.)

1. What was the maximum distance jumped in your group?

2. What was the minimum distance jumped in your group?

3. What was the range of distance jumped in your group?

4. What was the median distance jumped in your group? Remember to order your data set before you find the median.

Ordered data set: _____

Median: _____

GOLD MEDAL CHALLENGE

1. Calculate the average distance jumped in your group. If you add up all of the numbers and divide by the number of people in your group, you will have calculated the average.

Step 1. $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

Step 2. Divide total from step one by the number of people in your group.

Average distance jumped by your group _____.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

LONG JUMP DATA CONVERSIONS

Directions: In each space, write the name of the jumper and how far he or she jumped in inches. Then, convert each number into feet and inches. See the example below to get you started.

Example	Distance Jumped		Conversion
Jumper: <i>Sally</i>	<i>38</i> inches	equals	<i>3</i> feet and <i>2</i> inches

Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches
Jumper: _____	_____ inches	equals	_____ feet and _____ inches

Total distance jumped equals _____ inches or _____ feet and _____ inches

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Stepping to the Gold Sequencing Activity

Directions: Alice Coachman worked hard to achieve her goal. Write the number one next to the first event in her life, the number two next to the second event in her life until you've ordered all six events.

Alice earned a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute.	_____
Alice became the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal.	_____
Alice Coachman was born.	_____
Alice sailed to England.	_____
Alice led the Tuskegee Institute's women's basketball team to three state championships.	_____
Alice earned a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute.	_____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

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Alice earned a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute.	_____
Alice became the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal.	_____
Alice Coachman was born.	_____
Alice sailed to England.	_____
Alice led the Tuskegee Institute's women's basketball team to three state championships.	_____
Alice earned a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute.	_____

SUGGESTED BOOK PROJECTS

HERO/HEROINE CONTEST

Verbal/Linguistic and
Interpersonal

Think about a favorite hero or heroine. He or she could be a historical figure, someone you see everyday, or even an animal. Write a persuasive paragraph about your hero. Convince the class that he or she should win the contest. Read your paragraph to the class and then hold a vote. You can submit your paragraph to the Hero/Heroine Contest on the author's website (heatherlangbooks.com).

AFRICAN AMERICAN ATHLETE PLAYER CARDS

Verbal/Linguistic and
Visual/Spatial

Make an 11 by 18 inch player card of your favorite African American athlete. Your card should include a drawing of your athlete, three items that are important to your athlete such as a ball, shoes, or another piece of equipment, and a biography of your athlete that explains how he or she achieved success in his or her sport.

FRUIT STAND FUN

Interpersonal and
Logical/Mathematical

When Alice Coachman was growing up in the 1930's the fruit she picked was much cheaper than it is now. Primary students can have a 1930's fruit stand. Give each student \$1 and have them buy fake fruit from their peers. The fruit stand workers have to give correct change. Challenge students to buy as many pieces of fruit as possible for \$1. Here are the prices: a dozen apples for \$.29, one grapefruit for \$.5, six lemons for \$.10, and 15 oranges for \$.25. Intermediate students can calculate the price increase percentage from then to now. Pea Pod, an online grocery store, charges the following for the same fruit in 2012: a dozen apples for \$8.28, one grapefruit for \$1.00, six lemons for \$5.34, and 15 oranges for \$13.35.

<http://www.gti.net/mocolib1//prices/1931.html>

<http://www.peapod.com>

GOLD MEDAL LETTERS

Interpersonal and
Verbal/Linguistic

Even though segregation prevented Alice Coachman from interacting with white people during her celebratory parade, some white people sent her anonymous gifts. Assign each student a name of another student in the class. Have each student write an anonymous letter to his or her assigned person celebrating the student's strengths. Letters should be delivered to the teacher who can make sure they are appropriate before placing them in student's cubbies.

TWENTIETH CENTURY TIMELINE

Interpersonal and
Visual/Spatial

Students work together to create a timeline of the important civil rights dates in the 1900's.

THREE-ON-THREE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Interpersonal and Kinesthetic

Put students into teams of three people. Then, have a basketball tournament. If each game is five minutes long, the tournament will move quickly, and each team should have the opportunity to play the other teams in the class.