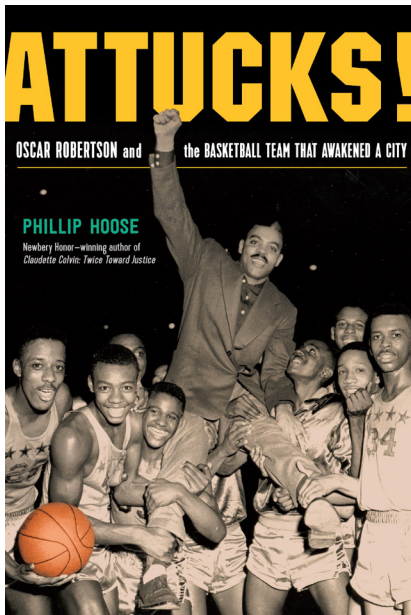


A Teacher's Guide to **ATTUCKS!** Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team That Awakened a City

FOR
USE WITH
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS

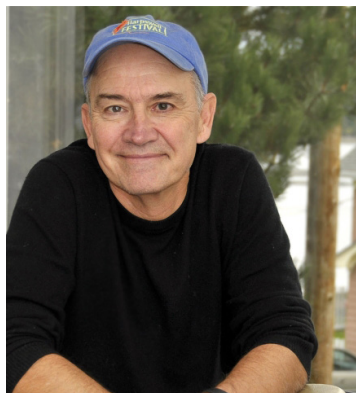


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ABOUT THE BOOK

By winning the state high school basketball championship in 1955, ten teens from an Indianapolis school meant to be the centerpiece of racially segregated education in the state shattered the myth of their inferiority. Their brilliant coach had fashioned an unbeatable team from a group of boys born in the South and raised in poverty. Anchored by the astonishing Oscar Robertson, a future college and NBA star, the Crispus Attucks Tigers went down in history as the first state champions from Indianapolis and the first all-black team in U.S. history to win a racially open championship tournament—an integration they had forced with their on-court prowess.

From native Hoosier and award-winning author Phillip Hoose comes this true story of a team up against impossible odds making a difference when it mattered most.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phillip Hoose is the author of *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, a National Book Award winner and a Newbery Honor Book. His other books include *Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95*, also a Robert F. Sibert Honor Book; *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler*, a Sibert Honor and *Boston Globe–Horn Book Nonfiction Honor* winner; and *We Were There, Too!*, a National Book Award finalist.

This guide is intended to support your classroom instruction. The standards listed throughout are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for grade seven, but the activities and questions can be applied to multiple grade levels. Please adapt the activities and questions to meet the needs of your students. You know your students better than anyone else!

BEFORE READING

1. The Great Migration was a critical time in U.S. history. First, read the text box on page 14 to get an overview of this topic. Next, using both primary and secondary sources, research the topic to determine what made this time in our history so important, and then predict how this topic connects to Oscar Robertson’s story.

CCSS.W.7.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

2. Read “A Note from the Author” and, using evidence from the text, explain why Hoose wanted to write a book telling the story of the Attucks basketball team.

CCSS.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Jim Crow laws impact residents in Indianapolis? Provide specific examples from the text.
2. What impact did the Ku Klux Klan have on Indianapolis? How did this group rise in popularity so quickly?
3. Hoose ends Chapter 1 with, “They didn’t know it yet, but their day was coming.” What impact does this type of sentence have on the flow of the chapter?
4. In Chapter 2, Hoose explains the popularity of basketball in Indiana. Provide evidence that Hoosiers loved the game with a unique passion. Based on the evidence Hoose provides, do you agree that basketball dominated the state?
5. Why was Attucks initially prevented from participating in the state basketball tournament?
6. Dr. Russell Lane had high hopes and major aspirations for the Attucks basketball team and for all Crispus Attucks High School students. What did he hope his school and team would be able to do for people of color in Indianapolis? How did he go about meeting his goals?
7. “Respect all, but back down from no on—here was a life lesson Ray could live by.” Why did this become Ray Crowe’s mantra and what did it mean to him and the players he coached?
8. How did the newspaper coverage of the Attucks basketball team as described in Chapter 4 differ between white and black newspapers? Use both the primary source and secondary source information in the chapter to defend your thinking.
9. As Hoose explains, “The game was a study in contrasts. While the Dunkirk players moved around the court in cautious, probing patterns, as if there were square dances and ballads running through their heads, Attucks played a form of jazz. Players improvised their attack at high speed, based on Ray Crowe’s fundamental knowledge of fast-break basketball.” Why did Hoose choose to use this analogy to describe the differences in playing style? Does this analogy make the differences clearer to the reader? Why or why not?

10. When Attucks entered the 1952 state tournament, things began to shift in Indianapolis. “There were some very tentative signs, tender buds popping from the trees, that the city’s racial climate was starting to thaw, at least toward the athletes who wore green-and-gold letter jackets.” What evidence does Hoose give that things were improving for the players on the Attucks basketball team? Do you agree with his statement based on the evidence provided?
11. “It was as if the others were playing checkers and Oscar Robertson was playing chess.” How does this analogy give the reader a clear picture of Oscar’s skill on the court?
12. Racism toward the Attucks basketball team impacted the players’ daily lives as well as their basketball games. Using both primary and secondary sources from Chapter 6, summarize the impact of racism on the success of the team.
13. How did the players on the basketball team become activists for racial justice? Was this their intention from the start, or did it just happen over time?
14. After Attucks won its first state championship, Oscar Robertson was unable to enjoy the celebrations hosted by the city of Indianapolis. Why was he so frustrated with the choices city officials made in planning their celebration?
15. How did the success of the Attucks basketball team start to change opinions about race among the white residents of Indianapolis?

CCSS.RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

CCSS.RI.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.RI.7.5 Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.RI.7.8 Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

CCSS.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Hoose selected a poem by “Mr. Ward,” “Bound for the Promised Land,” as an introduction to Chapter 1. Why was this poem a perfect fit for the chapter? Using your explanation, select a poem to introduce another chapter in the book and explain your selection with evidence from the chapter chosen.

CCSS.RI.7.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

2. On page 22, Hoose explains that “On primary election day in 1922, the [Ku Klux] Klan ran a motorcade through Frog Island, firing revolvers into the air to pin citizens indoors so they wouldn’t go out and vote.” Research voting in the United States today and determine if eligible Americans are prevented from voting. If so, how is their vote impacted and why? If not, what safeguards have been put in place to make sure all who have the right to vote can do so?

CCSS.RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

CCSS.W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.W.7.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

3. The KKK had a huge influence on the politics and policies of Indianapolis and greatly impacted the people of color living in the city during the 1920s and beyond. Does the KKK still have a foothold in decision making in Indianapolis or any other major U.S. city? Research the KKK and its role in politics today and report your findings by designing a pamphlet to be sent to voters in the city you researched.

CCSS.W.7.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

4. The players at Attucks revolutionized the game of basketball in Indiana with their style of play and creative moves. Using a free online creation tool (canva.com/create/infographics or piktochart.com), create an infographic that details the impact Attucks had on the sport of basketball and how the sport continued to change. Be sure to use basketball-specific vocabulary and include biographical information on each player who introduced new moves or made changes in how the game was played.

CCSS.W.7.2.D Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.W.7.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

5. On page 79, Hoose describes “Oscar Robertson’s boyhood geometry [as] a rectangle: home, church with his family, school, and Lockefield.” Sketch Robertson’s geometry and describe why each place was important to him. Next, sketch your own geometry, selecting a shape of your choosing and including important locations that have impacted your life.

CCSS.W.7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.W.7.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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