



# Alice Coachman

## Teacher Guide: From hard times to great heights

### Overview:

This lesson provides an overview of an African-American female athlete who overcame multiple barriers (racial, gender-based, historical, socioeconomic) in order to achieve her dreams of Olympic success. It is suitable for a lesson in history class, and would make an enriching addition to a physical education curriculum.

### Lesson Prompt:

Can you name any Olympic medal winners? What Olympic competitions have you seen? What do you think it takes to be able to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games?

Share the prepared PowerPoint slide deck with students.

Select from the list of critical thinking, discussion, and multiple-choice questions to engage students in dialogue and measure their understanding. There are short videos available to complement the discussion, and activities for students to use to enrich their understanding of Olympic History and the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in expanding opportunities for African Americans.

### Vocabulary:

Exacerbated, Sharecropper, Irrepressible, Segregation, Prowess, Resourceful, Advocate, Pioneering, Multifaceted, Austerity, Endorsement, Reverberate, Trailblazer

### Recommended Resources:

["Alice Coachman – The Greatest HBCU Athlete of All Time"](#) by Crystal A. DeGregory, *HBCUHistory.org*

["Alice Coachman \(1923-2014\)"](#) by Emma Rothberg, *National Women's History Museum*

["Alice Coachman, 90, Dies; First Black Woman to Win Olympic Gold"](#) by Richard Goldstein, *The New York Times*

["Moment in time: Alice Coachman becomes first black woman to win Olympic gold"](#) by Rob Bagchi, *The Telegraph*

["Why an African American Sports Pioneer Remains Obscure,"](#) by Alan Greenblatt, *Code Switch*