



# Alice Coachman: Critical Thinking & Discussion Questions

What kinds of obstacles did Alice Coachman face in her life?

How did she manage to achieve outstanding success in spite of them?

What kinds of racial discrimination did Coachman face on her path to the Olympics? How and why did this discrimination continue after she won gold and was honored as a champion upon her return home? What was Coachman's response to these insults, and do you think her response was appropriate?

Do you think that people today face more or fewer obstacles to success, compared to years ago? How can people achieve their dreams and goals in spite of challenges?

Is it a greater achievement to reach a goal when you have to overcome obstacles in order to succeed?

Do challenges and obstacles motivate you or do they discourage you?

Have you ever met someone who became more determined when they encountered a setback?

What do you think is the best way to respond to a disappointment, setback, or obstacle?

Who are people who inspire you in your life?

Who are people who've gone out of their way to help you in your life?

Have you ever asked people directly for help in your life? Would you consider trying it?

What do you think might happen? What's the best that could happen? What is the worst that could happen?

Do you think that people generally like helping other people?

Would you go out of your way to help another person? Why or why not?

Have you ever gone out of your way to help someone? How did it make you feel?



Alice Coachman said that she was discouraged from participating in sports because she was a girl. Why do you think people held that view back then? Do you think people in her life changed their minds about that viewpoint after seeing her become famous for setting records and winning medals?

Are there any gender stereotypes today that keep people from participating in certain activities or pursuing certain goals? What about racial or ethnic stereotypes? Are there other types of stereotypes that some people face?

What advice would you give friends who felt that they shouldn't pursue their dreams?

What is the best advice you've ever received?

(Just for fun: What's the worst advice anyone's ever given you?)

### Activities

While Alice Coachman was the first African-American woman to win a **gold** medal, she was not the first to win an Olympic medal. Dig deeper to find out who was **the first African-American woman to win an Olympic medal**. What medal did she win, and in which event?

Investigate to learn who was the **first woman to become an Olympic Champion**. When did that happen, what country was she from, and in which event did that woman participate?

Research the **first African-American man** to win an Olympic medal and describe his story.

Research **Historically Black Colleges and Universities** and pick one to write a 1-page report on.