

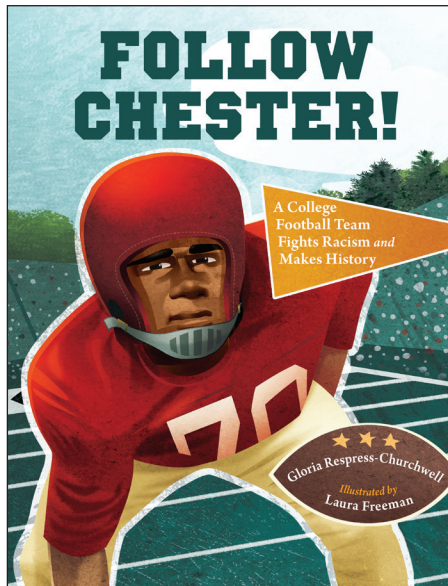
FOLLOW CHESTER!

A College Football Team Fights Racism
and Makes History

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The year is 1947, and Chester Pierce's varsity football team at Harvard is scheduled to play against the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Here's the catch: segregation prevents black athletes from playing against white athletes in the South. But Chester deserves to play, and his teammates have his back. This is a little-known story of a major civil rights figure.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gloria Respress-Churchwell holds an MA and an MFA from Simmons University and is an award-winning documentary producer and director. She is co-contributor to the Robert Churchwell Journalism Collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. This is her debut picture book. Gloria lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Laura Freeman has illustrated more than twenty children's books, including the Coretta Scott King Honor Book *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race*. She holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Laura lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pre-Reading Discussion

Show students the cover and read the title aloud. Ask them to guess what the book will be about. Then read the copy on the back cover. Do they want to make new guesses, or was their first guess probably right?

Context Knowledge

Ask students to quietly consider the following and jot down their thoughts:

- What do they think will happen in this book?
- Have they read any books like this before?
- What do they know about the time and place where this book is set?

Post-Reading Discussion

As a class, discuss the following:

- What year does this book take place?
 - How long ago was that?
- At the beginning of this book, how does Chester feel about himself?
 - What are some things that happen to make his confidence grow?
- Why did the UVA coaches think Harvard wouldn't bring Chester to the game?
- Chester knows talking to his mother will help him feel better about going to this game. Who do you talk to when you're feeling nervous?

- Define the term "discrimination." What are some ways that Chester is discriminated against in the South?
 - How do his teammates support him when this happens?
 - What are some ways that you can support a friend who is being discriminated against or treated unfairly?
- Read the flap copy together.
 - Does this flap copy give you new information or change your understanding of what the book is about?
 - Is there anything about this flap copy that you would change?

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ACTIVITIES

Going Places

Pass out grid or dot paper and ask students to draw a map showing the locations where this book takes place: Glen Cove, New York (Chester's hometown), Cambridge, Massachusetts (where he went to school), and Charlottesville, Virginia (where he played his historic game).

Where do your students live in relation to these places? Ask them to mark their location on this map as well, along with essential map features such as a compass, a distance scale, and a legend.

Listicles

As a class, read through the list of facts about Dr. Chester Pierce at the end of this book. Are they in any particular order?

Divide students into small groups and ask them to make flashcards of the facts and organize them in a way that makes sense to them (by importance, in chronological order, by topic, by location, etc). Each group will then present their list order to the class and briefly explain their reasons for choosing this order.

Making Music

Visit www.charlesbridge.com/FollowChester and listen together to the music that the author chose to complement this story. Discuss the following:

- Why do you think the author chose these songs, in this order?

- If you had to pick a song to add to the list, which would you pick? Why?

Invite students to write a few sentences naming and explaining their choice of song. Collect their papers and create a playlist for the whole class to enjoy.

Timeline

Read through the author's note and the lists of facts at the back of the book. As a class, pick out the major events from these texts, write them on notecards or post-its, and make a timeline on poster paper to organize them chronologically. Make a special card in a different color to indicate the date of Chester's game against UVA. Take a moment to examine the timeline together, then discuss:

- Is there anything that surprises you about this timeline?
- Do you think any other events should be on this timeline?

FOLLOW CHESTER!

RESEARCH WEB

The author's note at the end of *Follow Chester!* names a number of pioneering black athletes. Pick one and fill out this research web.

The diagram is a research web consisting of four ovals. At the top left is an oval labeled "Birthdate & Hometown". At the top right is an oval labeled "Sport(s) & Team(s)". In the center is an oval labeled "Name". At the bottom is a large oval labeled "Major Accomplishments". Lines connect the "Birthdate & Hometown" and "Sport(s) & Team(s)" ovals to the "Name" oval. A line connects the "Name" oval to the "Major Accomplishments" oval.

FOLLOW CHESTER!

WORD SEARCH

**R V Y L T R V F D
A E I K I V O G R
C A T C X O A M A
I R G S T M L A V
S V P B E O S E R
M Y A L P H R T A
M L O E B N C Y H
L A I N I G R I V
P R O T E S T M L**

**CHESTER
FOOTBALL
GAME
HARVARD**

**PLAY
PROTEST
TEAM**

**RACISM
VICTORY
VIRGINIA**