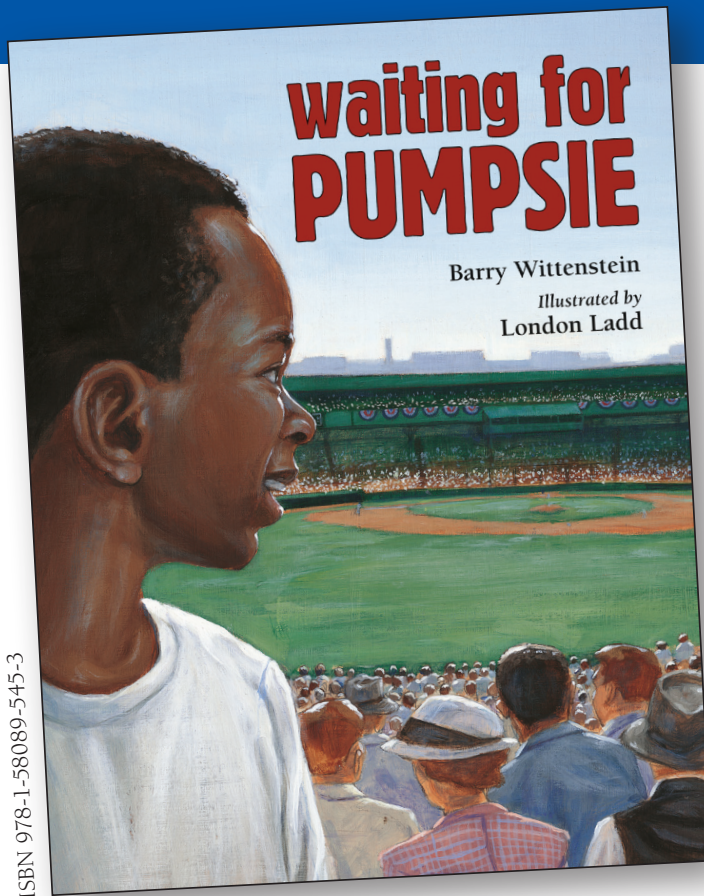


Curriculum Guide



Waiting for PUMPSIE

BY **Barry Wittenstein**

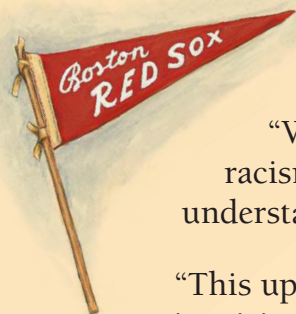
ILLUSTRATED BY
London Ladd

It's 1959. Bernard lives in Boston, and he dreams about a day when a baseball player who looks like him will play for his beloved Red Sox. Bernard's mother says change is

coming soon. Bernard's father says she's always right. But they are all disappointed when no black player is called up from the minors to start the season.

April and May and June pass. The Sox fall into last place. Then it happens.

Young readers will embrace this important story about the historic moment sixty years ago when the last Major League Baseball team to integrate finally calls up Elijah "Pumpsie" Green.



★ "Bernard is innocent, aware, and endlessly hopeful and will win readers hearts. A grand slam."—*KIRKUS REVIEWS*, starred review

"With its tacit acknowledgement that social change is a slow process and that racism was not confined to the South, this picture book contributes to children's understanding of America's past, while telling a good story."—*BOOKLIST*

"This uplifting account of a family and the integration of Boston baseball will be inspiring to many youngsters."—*SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL*

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The Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Who is Pumpsie Green? What does Pumpsie represent to Bernard and his family?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



From whose point of view is the story told? How does this point of view affect the telling of how Pumpsie came to be a player for the Boston Red Sox?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



As a devoted Red Sox fan, what bothers Bernard about his beloved team? Why does he think that the situation is unusual?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



Who is Elston Howard? How is he significant in *Waiting for Pumpsie*?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



What transpires between Bernard's family and the man sitting behind them at Fenway Park? Discuss how the police respond to the situation.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



What does Bernard's mother mean when she tells him, "Change is coming real soon"?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



Look carefully at the illustration of a large newspaper in the middle of the book. What do the headlines and photos reveal about how the Red Sox fans react to the team's struggle to win and about which players are on the team?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7](#)



When Pumpsie is called up to the Major Leagues at last, Bernard and his family gather around the radio to listen to his first game. Describe how and why the family's emotions change over the course of the game.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



When Bernard's father surprises the family with tickets to Pumpsie's first home game in Boston, what does Bernard notice about the fans in the stands?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)



Why does Bernard tell himself to take a mental picture of Fenway and the crowd as he heads toward the exit after the game?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#)



As Bernard takes the bus home after the game, what does he see and hear with regard to Pumpsie?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Opinion Piece

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball when he became the first African American baseball player to play with the Brooklyn Dodgers. What is your opinion about the twelve-year gap between Robinson's arrival and Pumpsie Green's arrival in the Major Leagues? Write an essay that presents your opinion. Support your opinion with reasons and examples.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1](#)

Baseball Card

Research Pumpsie's statistics as a player and use these facts to design a baseball card featuring an illustration of Pumpsie, information about his team and positions, and facts about his batting record.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#)

America in 1959

What was happening in our country in 1959, the year Pumpsie was called up from the minors to play for the Red Sox? Research what was going on politically and socially in the United States in the 1950s. Use facts gathered from your research to write a short informative report about life in America and the treatment of people of color in our country during that time period.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#)

Fabulous Fenway

Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, plays an important role in *Waiting for Pumpsie*. Research the history of this famous baseball stadium. Use the facts that you discover to create a labeled illustration or model of Fenway Park. Be sure to include the infamous Green Monster in your illustration or model.

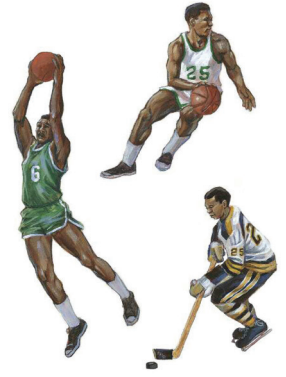
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#);
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#)



The discussion questions and activities in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

NAME: _____

FINDING WHAT LEADS TO CHANGE



The Red Sox were the only professional sports team in Boston without an African American player until Pumpsie Green was promoted in 1959. Look through *Waiting for Pumpsie* and identify the causes and effects that led to the Red Sox finally integrating their team.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

CAUSE (Because of this ...)	EFFECT (... this happened)
Pumpsie Green is recognized as a great ball player in the minor leagues, but doesn't make the Red Sox lineup.	
	Pumpsie enters the game as a pinch runner in the eighth inning in his debut in Chicago on July 21, 1959.
A photo of Ted Williams giving batting tips to Pumpsie appears in the newspaper.	
	The fans in Fenway and the people of Boston cheer for Pumpsie Green.

NAME: _____

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Think carefully about *Waiting for Pumpsie* and the connections you can make between the book and yourself, other things you've read, and the larger world. Record your connections below.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2

Text to Self

(Connections you can make between the story and your own life experiences)



Text to Text

(Connections you can make between the story and other things that you have read—stories by the same author, or stories from a similar genre or with a similar plot)

Text to World

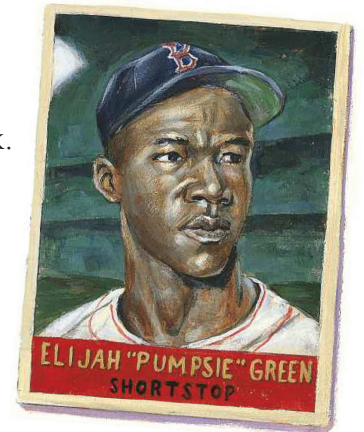
(Broader connections you can make to something that you have learned from television, movies, newspapers, or magazines)

NAME: _____

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

In the eyes of Bernard and his family, the change in the racial make-up of the Boston Red Sox was a long time coming. How did the events in the story lead to the change so many Red Sox fans had hoped to see? Number the following story events in the order in which they appear in *Waiting for Pumpsie*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1



_____ Bernard decides that one day he will tell his own kids how Pumpsie Green played for the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park.

_____ Mama confronts a man seated near her family at Fenway Park who used inappropriate language.

_____ Pumpsie is finally brought up to the Red Sox but doesn't enter the game until the eighth inning.

_____ Pumpsie almost hits a home run. The ball bounces off the top of the Green Monster.

_____ The owner of the Red Sox doesn't put Pumpsie on the team even though he is a talented rookie.

_____ Bernard's family goes to Fenway Park to see Pumpsie play.

_____ Bernard hears cheers of people shouting, "Pumpsie! Pumpsie!" as he travels home after the game at Fenway.

_____ Fans react that they want Pumpsie to play for the Red Sox.

_____ Someone in the stands at Fenway yells, "Get that Negro off the field!"



Answers: 9, 1, 4, 7, 2, 5, 8, 3, 6