



The Great Athlete Debate

Category: Group Activity

Series: The MLB Fan's Guide (*12 Reasons to Love the Detroit Tigers*)

Supplies

12 Reasons to Love the Detroit Tigers, 2 whiteboards (chalkboards or drawing pads can also be used)

Prep

Read the sections of *12 Reasons to Love the Detroit Tigers* on Justin Verlander (p. 10-11) and Ty Cobb (p. 14-15), or assign them to students to read ahead of time.

Directions

Have students turn to a neighbor and discuss what qualities make someone a favorite or famous athlete (ex. skills, personality, etc.).

Explain that both Justin Verlander and Ty Cobb excelled on the baseball field, but they were known for behaving differently off the field. Verlander was known for being friendly, while Cobb was known for his temper. As a group, discuss the following questions:

1. How can being aggressive on the field help an athlete play well?
2. Does this mean an athlete should also be aggressive off the field?
3. Does it matter if an athlete is friendly or polite?
4. Does it matter if an athlete gives to charity? What does this show about his or her personality?

After the discussion, split the students into two groups. Explain that the students will have a debate about what it means to be a great player. Assign one group to the position that an athlete's on-field performance is the only thing that matters. Assign the other group to the position that an athlete's off-field behavior is just as important. Have each group choose two spokespeople. Then give each group 15 minutes to think of all the evidence that supports their side. The evidence can be from the book, from the group discussion, or from their own experiences. They should write this evidence down on their whiteboard. After the 15 minutes are up, have each of the spokespeople come to the front of the class and summarize their group's evidence to the rest of the class.

Evaluation

Did the students participate in each phase of the discussion? Did each group come up with logical proof to support its claims? Did the spokespeople mention specific information from the book or from the group discussion? SL 4.1; 4.4; 5.1; 5.4

Purpose

To help students practice presenting and supporting arguments and opinions verbally, as well as to help them engage in a variety of discussion formats.