Read the passages “Jackie Robinson” and “I Never Had it Made” and the poem “jackie robinson” and answer Numbers 1 through 9.

**Jackie Robinson**

From *Enjoying American History*

In the years after World War II, the United States took a new look at law and customs that kept Black Americans apart from other Americans.

For years blacks had complained that they were second-class citizens. In many parts of the United States, blacks were required to attend separate, racially segregated schools. They were barred from “white” hotels, restaurants, and places of worship. They were confined mainly to low-paying jobs, often the hard and dirty jobs that no one else wanted to take. In both North and South, blacks lived mostly in “black” neighborhood because “white” neighborhoods were often closed to them. In parts of the South, blacks were not allowed to vote or even to register to vote. In the army, blacks were placed in separate units apart from whites.

During World War II, some American, black and white, had spoken out against such practices. How could the United States claim to be fighting for basic freedoms abroad, they asked, when it denied full rights to black Americans at home? In 1946 President Truman appointed a committee on civil rights to look into the question of race relations. What problems existed? How could they be resolved?

About this time, a white baseball executive was making that move that would have lasting effects. The executive’s name was Branch Rickey, and he was head of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Rickey hired a baseball player named Jackie Robinson—the first black American to be hired for a major league team.

Once Jackie Robinson had broken the color line, other black players entered the major leagues. Within a few years, blacks were the leading players on many of the teams.

Meanwhile, new efforts were made to end discrimination against blacks. In 1948, President Truman asked Congress to pass a variety of civil rights laws. He wanted laws to protect blacks’ rights to vote, travel, and get good jobs. He also wanted a law against lynching and a law to end discrimination in the armed forces.

When Congress failed to act, Truman went ahead on his own. He ordered equality in the armed services and in federal hiring. He also set up a committee to make sure that companies doing work for the government did not discriminate against blacks.

Robinson retired from baseball in 1957 to become a business executive. He also devoted more time to the civil-rights movement. In 1972 he died of a heart attack at the age of 53.
That same spring the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia, where my roommates were quartered, refused to accommodate me. The Phillies heckled me a second time, mixing up race baiting with childish remarks and gestures that coincided with the threats that had been made. Some of those grown men sat in the dugout and pointed bats at me and made machine-gunlike noises. It was an incredibly childish display of bad will.

I was helped over the crises by the courage and decency of a teammate who could easily have been my enemy rather than my friend. Pee Wee Reese, the successful Dodger shortstop, was one of the most highly respected players in the major leagues. When I first joined the club, I was aware that there might well be a real reluctance on Reese’s part to accept me as a teammate. He was from Ekron, Kentucky.

Furthermore, it had been rumored that I might take over Reese’s position on the team. Mischief-makers seeking to create trouble between us had tried to agitate Reese into regarding me as a threat—a black on at that. But Reese, from the time I joined Brooklyn, had demonstrated a totally fair attitude.

Reese told a sportswriter, some months after I became a Dodger, “When I first met Robinson in spring training, I figured, well, let me give this guy a chance. It may be he’s just as good as I am. Frankly, I don’t think I’d stand up under that kind of thing he’s been subjected to as well as he has.”

Reese’s tolerant attitude of withholding judgment to see if I would make it was translated into positive support soon after we became teammates. In Boston during a period when the heckling pressure seemed unbearable, some of the Boston players began to heckle Reese. They were riding him about being a Southerner and playing with a black man. Pee Wee Reese didn’t answer them. Without a glance in their directions, he left his position and walked over to me. He put his hand on my shoulder and began talking to me. His words weren’t important. I don’t even remember what he said. It was a gesture of comradeship and support that counted. As he stood talking to me with a friendly arm around my shoulder, he was saying loud and clear, “Yell. Heckle. Do anything you want. We came here to play baseball.”

The jeering stopped, and a close and lasting friendship began between Reese and me.

Baseball infielder Jackie Robinson points to #42 on the Dodgers scoreboard at his retirement, Ebbets Field, Brooklyn, NYC, January 1957.
1. Read the following lines from the poem.

was not foul
but, *brave as a hit*
over whitestone fences

What literary device does the author use in the italicized words above?  
A. simile, comparing Robinson to a baseball  
B. personification, giving human qualities to the baseball  
C. symbolism, stating that Robinson represented a baseball  
D. hyperbole, exaggerating Robinson’s bravery to create an effect

2. What is the author’s purpose in the first article?  
F. to explain the racial climate of the 1940s  
G. to persuade readers to fight discrimination  
H. to persuade readers to fight for their rights  
I. to describe the feelings of a Black American

3. The author of *I Never Had It Made* would most likely make the statement that
   A. accepting one’s role in life can make things easier to bear.  
   B. overcoming obstacles can be easier with the help of a friend.  
   C. feeling sorry for oneself often helps a person accomplish goals.  
   D. understanding the hatred of others can help you ignore prejudices.

4. Pee Wee Reese could best be described as
   F. a courageous man who accepted Robinson as a person.  
   G. a crafty ballplayer who recognized an opportunity for publicity.  
   H. a bigoted Southerners who made Robinson’s work more difficult.  
   I. a fair man who thought Robinson would eventually leave baseball.
5. What conclusion can you draw from the three selections about Jackie Robinson?
   A. He was a brave man who fought tirelessly for civil rights.
   B. He was an athlete who tried to remain neutral on race issues.
   C. He was a fighter who overcame obstacles by confronting his hecklers.
   D. He was an athlete who took on the challenge of being the first black in the major league.

6. Read the following lines from the poem.

   ran against walls
   without breaking

Based on the rest of the poem, which sentence best restates the meaning of the lines above?
   F. Robinson ignored the hatred of the team’s owner.
   G. Robinson faced his own self-doubt and insecurities.
   H. Robinson overcame an inability to play baseball well.
   I. Robinson endured the prejudices of the other players.

7. What would be another good title for the passage “Jackie Robinson”?
   A. Breaking Barriers
   B. A Black Man’s Story
   C. Discrimination in Baseball
   D. A Struggle On and Off the Field

8. How does the author organize the excerpt from I Never Had It Made?
   F. He uses the testimony of other people to tell his story.
   G. He discusses the history of the times and how it influenced baseball.
   H. He uses some examples from his early career to illustrate his struggles.
   I. He mostly discusses the relationships he had with other baseball players.

9. From lowercase letters in the title “jackie robinson,” the reader can conclude that the author of the poem thought Jackie Robinson
   A. was a hero who suffered from low self-esteem.
   B. was a humble man who made a great contribution.
   C. was an unusual man who like to break all the rules.
   D. was a shy man who hated all the attention he received.