

Teacher Guide to Student Worksheet 2-Analyzing Primary Resources

Word Box

laurelled- to crown with a laurel, a plant woven into wreaths by the Greeks to honor winners of athletic contests

indiscretion - lack of good judgment

heinous – outrageously evil

hale- vigorous and healthy

prosperous- having continued success

defunct- no longer existing

czar – an emperor

Student Handouts 2 and 3: “Two Views of Jim Thorpe,” *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, February 1, 1913.

1. What were some of the ways that the author described Jim Thorpe?

He called him “the greatest all around athlete that this or any other country has ever known”. He described his records as “marvelous” and talks about how followers of sports will remember him regardless of him losing his medals.

2. Why exactly did Jim Thorpe lose his Olympic honors?

He played professional baseball for two summers in a league that was no longer in existence at the time of the scandal.

3. Describe the two items that Jim Thorpe was given at the Olympics that would be returned?

A bust of the king of Sweden and a Viking ship given by the czar of Russia.

4. From the author’s perspective, was it fair that Jim Thorpe lost his status as an Olympic champion?

No, I don’t think the author thought it was fair because he describes Jim Thorpe’s baseball career as a “small indiscretion”. He says, “It seems a very little thing that this great Carlisle star did.”

5. How would you feel if you were Jim Thorpe? What would you do?

Answers may vary. This is a good point to discuss ways to resolve conflict. They may suggest talking to the Olympic committee or perhaps writing a letter.

Student Handout 4-Letter from Jim Thorpe to Mr. Sullivan

6. What did Thorpe admit to doing in the summers of 1909 and 1910?

He admitted to playing semi-pro baseball at Rocky Mount and at Fayetteville, North Carolina.

7. What reason did he give for doing this?

He played because "[he] liked to play ball."

8. Do you think Jim Thorpe knew that he was doing something wrong? Give evidence from the letter.

Students could answer this question either way, as long as they are giving appropriate evidence to back up their answers:

*Yes, I think Jim Thorpe knew he was doing something wrong:
He was told not to tell anyone about the fact that he was playing. This must have tipped him off that others would think it was wrong.
Also, didn't he wonder why other players were playing under made-up names?
He also denied initial reports that, although factually incorrect, held the larger truth to them that he was playing semi-pro baseball.*

*No, Jim Thorpe did not know what he was doing would be considered wrong:
If Jim Thorpe had known that playing semi-pro baseball was wrong, he wouldn't have played under his own name.
He also points out that it is confusing that he would be considered professional in track events, although he was paid in baseball.
He says he did not need the money, and he played because he loved to play ball. I do not think he would have risked his Olympic chances just to play ball in a short-lived league.*

Student Handout 5-Jim Thorpe Photographs

Look at the photographs.

9. What does each image show?

The images show him participating in various sporting events.

10. What does it tell you about Jim Thorpe?

*These pictures show him excelling as an all-around athlete.
The images show what a **diverse athlete** he was (football, baseball, and track and field images shown). In each of these sports there are different techniques to learn, rules to follow, and physical abilities that are assets. Thorpe mastered these at the **highest level** of play.
The pictures also show Thorpe participating in both the Olympics and professional sports.*