

Follow Chester!: A College Football Team Fights Racism and Makes History

A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

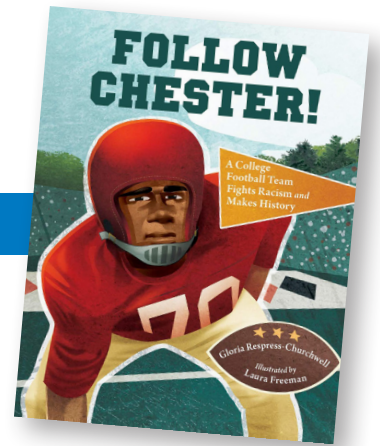
Themes: Acceptance, Changemakers, Racism, Teamwork.

Book Brief: In 1947, Chester Pierce was the only Black player on the Harvard football team. With the support of his coaches and teammates and a play called “Follow Chester,” he became the first Black player to compete in an intercollegiate football game south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Author:
Gloria Respress-Churchwell

Illustrator:
Laura Freeman

Content Connections:
Social Studies



TIME TO READ!

BEFORE WE READ LET'S LOOK AT...



The Cover: Read the title and subtitle and point out the collegiate flag and football graphic. Ask students to think about the expression on Chester's face. Does he look happy, sad, angry, scared, determined?

The Pictures: Take a brief picture walk through the book. Ask students to notice how often Chester is shown alone versus

with the team. Why might the illustrator choose to do this?

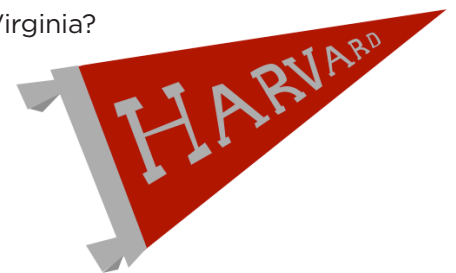
Content Specific Vocabulary: varsity, teammate, stadium, turf, jersey, referee, sideline

Purpose for Reading: Say to students, “As we read, think about the author's purpose for telling Chester's story. Why might the author think kids should know about Chester?”

WHILE WE READ

MONITORING FOR COMPREHENSION

- How is Chester Pierce different from other players on his football team?
- Why might Chester have to stay behind when his team goes to play in Virginia?
- What are two challenges Chester, and his team, have to handle when they are in Virginia?
- What does the phrase “Follow Chester” mean?
- Why does Chester say, “We've already won” before they even play the game?
- How does Chester deal with boos from the crowd at the game?
- Why was the game that Chester Pierce played at the University of Virginia historic?



LET'S THINK ABOUT

Our Purpose: How does reading about individuals in history help us understand what challenges larger groups of people have faced? Ask students how they think Chester's story reflects what African American people have experienced in this country.

Extending Our Thinking: Is it possible to be a role model at any age? Ask students to think about

whether there are people in their life, perhaps even at school, who are looking up to them for inspiration and how they can inspire people through action.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- Vocabulary Scaffolding sheet also available.