

# MAJOR TAYLOR

>>> FASTEST CYCLIST IN THE WORLD



**THE REMARKABLE STORY OF CHAMPION CYCLIST AND TRAILBLAZER MARSHALL “MAJOR” TAYLOR INSPIRES US TO TALK ABOUT WHO RIDES BICYCLES, TEST OUR ATHLETIC SKILLS, TINKER WITH BIKE DESIGN AND MECHANICS, AND DISCOVER THE JOY OF RIDING FREE AND GOING WHERE WE LIKE.**

Inside the exhibit, Major Taylor: Fastest Cyclist in the World, you'll discover the life and career of this Black sports superstar and Indianapolis native. You can venture into the training room to learn how Taylor developed his speed and agility through a strict regimen of exercise and diet. Discover the pervasive racism that Taylor battled – from his competitors and in his hometown – and hear from great contemporary cyclists about how Taylor's story has inspired a new generation of Black riders.

**THE EXHIBIT HAS THREE AREAS OF FOCUS: THE MECHANICS, HIS LIFE, AND HIS LEGACY.**

**The Mechanics:** Get hands-on with bicycle mechanics in the Bike Shop. Build your own bike then test it on the test track. Take a quiz to find out if you were a bike, what kind would you be? Learn how to change a flat tire. Race Major Taylor's world-record times as you pedal on a stationary bike.

**His Life:** Major Taylor was an accomplished, world-renowned athlete and a devoted family man. Learn more about his success through photographs and scrapbooks that detail his racing strategies and his determination to overcome racism on and off the track. Also, read personal letters written to his wife and daughter while he traveled abroad.

**His Legacy:** Major Taylor has left a lasting impact on the cycling world in many ways. See and hear stories from current pro athletes and hobbyists. Find out about the “Invisible Riders” in our community – the people who rely almost solely on bikes to get where they need to go. Learn how you can become more involved in ongoing efforts to make our city more bike friendly.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

This exhibit and related program experiences connect with the following Indiana Academic Standards but may connect with additional classroom curriculum.

- **English:** 4.RN.3.3; 5.RN.3.3
- **Science:** K.PS.4; 2.PS.4; 3.PS.1; 3-5.E.1; 3-5.E.2; 3-5.E.3; 4.PS.1; 4.PS.2; 4.PS.3; 6-8.E.2; 6-8.E.4; 7.PS.5; 7.PS.6
- **History:** 1.1.1; 1.4.1; 2.3.7; 4.1.11; 4.1.12; 4.3.12; 4.4.1; 6.1.22; 6.1.23; 8.1.31
- **Indiana Studies:** IS.1.35; IS.5.6
- **US History:** USH.2.9
- **Ethnic Studies:** ES.1.3; ES.2.3; ES.4.1



## PLAN YOUR FIELD TRIP

### Before the field trip

- If possible, visit the exhibit before your field trip. Experiencing the exhibit first and knowing your students, you will be able to better prepare your students to get the most out of their visit. The exhibit has three main focuses: the mechanics, his life, and his legacy.
- Prepare students for their field trip to the Indiana State Museum and share your expectation that they visit this exhibit.
- Either as a whole class, in small groups, or individually, have students discuss and document what they know about Major Taylor and bicycles. This will serve as a pre-assessment and baseline of students' knowledge.
- This exhibit does discuss the racism that Major Taylor faced both on and off the racetrack. We encourage students to listen and consider how things have changed, or stayed the same, for Black athletes.
- Adding a school program to your field trip is a great option to extend the connection between the museum and classroom learning. Programs are available at the Indiana State Museum, virtually, or at your school. Visit [www.indianamuseum.org/field-trips/](http://www.indianamuseum.org/field-trips/) to explore program options, including Major Taylor themed programs.
- For additional pre-field trip planning tips and tricks, visit: [www.indianamuseum.org/field-trips/](http://www.indianamuseum.org/field-trips/)

### During the field trip

- This is an exhibit where students get to test and try things! Some experiences may be hard to leave. It can be helpful for chaperones to give students a set time to explore different areas or count down the time they have left in the exhibit.
- Consider giving students big questions to think about during their field trip. Share a printed list with chaperones to help spark discussion.
  - How have bikes changed since the late 1800s? What has stayed the same?
  - How do bikes work?
  - What simple machines are used in a bicycle?
  - How are Newton's Laws of Motion at work while riding a bike?
  - What are the different parts of a bike?
  - How do you use a bicycle?
  - How do you see bicycles used in your community?
  - What challenges did Major Taylor face? Do modern day athletes face similar or different challenges?
  - How did other athletes view Major Taylor?
  - Who determines someone's legacy? What can impact a person's legacy?

### After the field trip

- Review with your students what they learned in the exhibit. What stood out to them? Have students reflect on the big questions. Responses could be in the form of class discussion, art project, essay, etc.
- Have students list and display ways that bicycles are used in their community. What makes it easier and/or challenging for bicycle users?
- Ask students to reflect on the barriers that Major Taylor faced. Do those barriers still exist? Why or why not?
- Major Taylor kept detailed notes and scrapbooks about his life and experiences. How do students today track details of their life? How will this information shape what people know about an individual? Does it give a complete picture as to who that person is? Why or why not?



## Tips for Chaperones

- Students must be accompanied by a chaperone at all times, regardless of grade level.
- You will serve as a first line of support for the students, and they will follow your lead.
- Remind students of appropriate field trip behavior: walking feet, inside voices, share the space, and stick with the group.
- It is okay to not know the answer! If you are asked a question you aren't sure how to answer, tell them you will find out together, or write it down for when they return to the classroom. A museum team member in a blue polo shirt can also help at any time.
- *Some content in the exhibit, such as the racism that Taylor faced, may be hard for some students to process. They may react with laughter, jokes, tears, silence, anger, etc. This laughter can be a way for them to handle and process the content. Simply asking a student, "What do you think about this information?" can allow that student an opportunity to discuss while taking the focus away from their laughter. It is also okay to acknowledge that this is hard information and sometimes we react with laughter until we can process it.*

Visit [www.indianamuseum.org/experiences/major-taylor-fastest-cyclist-in-the-world/](http://www.indianamuseum.org/experiences/major-taylor-fastest-cyclist-in-the-world/) for additional exhibit information.

## EDUCATOR RESOURCES

### Resources and activities to assist in extending the learning in your classroom:

#### The Mechanics:

- National Museum of American History Object Project: Bicycles = Liberation - <https://americanhistory.si.edu/object-project/bicycles>
- The Exploratorium's Science of Cycling - <https://www.exploratorium.edu/cycling/index.html>
- Science of Track Cycling - <https://scienceatl.org/science-of-track-cycling/>
- Five Science Lessons Cycling Taught Us - <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19166035>
- What is a Velodrome? <https://www.active.com/cycling/articles/what-is-a-velodrome>
- The Science of the Olympic Velodrome - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjLVQ3t9Bws>
- Science of Riding a Bicycle - video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zShn5xMueso>
- Science Buddies sports science projects - <https://www.sciencebuddies.org/blog/bike-science-the-physics-behind-cycling>
- Bicycle Water Bombs, science project - <https://www.education.com/science-fair/article/bicycle-water-bombs/>

#### His Life:

- Who was Major Taylor, according to the Major Taylor Association, Inc. - <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/who.shtml>
- Major Taylor Association's curriculum kit. Options available for grades 3 through high school - <http://www.majortaylorassociation.org/mtcurric.shtml>
- Major Taylor, the "Worcester Whirlwind, from NPR - <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4734062>
- Sports Illustrated video - <https://www.si.com/cycling/2020/02/11/black-history-month-major-taylor>
- Library of Congress, Major Taylor's story and primary sources - <https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2019/05/champion-cyclist-major-taylor/>



- Cycling and Racism in Early 20th-Century Indianapolis - <https://invisibleindianapolis.wordpress.com/2016/10/04/cycling-and-racism-in-early-20th-century-indianapolis/>
- National Museum of American History - Stories from the Museum - <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/2014/03/marshall-major-taylor-the-incredible-story-of-the-first-african-american-world-champion.html>

### His Legacy:

- Marshal Major Taylor state historic marker - <https://www.in.gov/history/state-historical-markers/find-a-marker/marshall-major-taylor/>
- Honoring the Legacy of African American Cycling Legend Major Taylor - <https://www.railstotrails.org/trailblog/2017/february/16/honoring-the-legacy-of-african-american-cycling-legend-major-taylor/>
- What is the enduring legacy of cycling champion 'Major' Taylor? <https://www.si.com/cycling/2020/02/11/black-history-month-major-taylor>
- IndyArts Council - Bicentennial Legend Major Taylor - <https://indyarts.org/legends/Taylor>
- Removing Barriers - the Legend and Legacy of Major Taylor - <https://www.tribc.org/news/removing-barriers-the-legend-and-legacy-of-major-taylor/>
- Major Taylor Velodrome - <https://indycycloplex.com/marshall-major-taylor-1>

### Books:

- *Major Taylor, Champion Cyclist* by Lesa Cline-Ransome
- *The Extraordinary Life of Cyclist Major Taylor, America's first Black Sports Hero* by Michael Kranish
  - o NPR Fresh Air interview with author - <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/18/733690233/uncovering-the-story-of-cyclist-major-taylor-americas-1st-black-sports-star>
- *Major Taylor: The Inspiring Story of a Black Cyclist and the Men who Helped him Achieve Worldwide Fame* by Conrad Kerber and Terry Kerber
- *The Young Cyclist's Companion* by Peter Drinkell
- Nine Children's Books about Bicycles - <https://joyousroar.com/2018/05/9-childrens-books-about-bicycles>
- 10 books about bike-loving girls - <https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=24936>
- NYPL books featuring bicycles - <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/11/30/bicycles-childrens-literature>

### Books in the exhibit's family resource area:

- *Go Bikes, Go!* by Addie Boswell and Alexander Mostov
- *All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color* by Katie Kissinger and Chris Bohnhoff
- *Shades of People* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
- *Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race* by Megan Madison, Jessica Ralli and Isabel Roxas
- *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, Ann Hazzard and Jennifer Zivojn
- *Children In Our World: Racism and Intolerance* by Louise Spilsbury and Hanane Kai
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About A Simple Act of Kindness* by Kerascoet
- *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman
- *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael Lopez
- *Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration* by Samara Cole Doyon and Kaylani Juanita
- *Leaders Like Us: Major Taylor* by J. P. Miller and Markia Jenai



- *Major Taylor: Champion Cyclist* by Lesa Cline-Ransome and James E. Ransome
- *Marshall 'Major' Taylor: World Champion Bicyclist 1899-1901* by Marlene Targ Brill
- *Bicycle: The Definitive Visual History* DK Publications/Random House

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