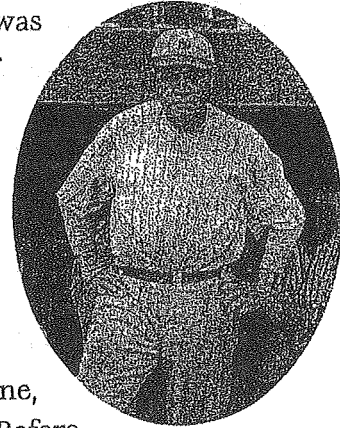


Babe Ruth

Babe Ruth, named George Herman Ruth, Jr., by his parents, was born in 1895 in Baltimore, Maryland. His mother and father worked long hours at a tavern they owned and had little time for their son. Often left on his own, George rarely went to school. Instead, he liked to wander around the streets of his rundown, waterfront neighborhood. By the time George was 7 years old, his parents were fed up with trying to control their **unruly** son. They sent him off to St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, a Catholic reform school and orphanage.



At St. Mary's, Brother Matthias, the school's head of discipline, helped George direct his restless energy into playing baseball. Before long, George could hit the ball harder and farther than many of the older boys. When he was about 15, he learned to be a pitcher. This was a position for which George, a left-hander, soon showed an extraordinary ability.

In 1914 George left St. Mary's with a contract to play for a minor league team. Because he was so young, his new teammates called him "Babe." This became the name that stuck with him for the rest of his life. That same year he was sold to the Boston Red Sox. At the age of 19, Babe Ruth had become a major league baseball player.

For the next six years, Ruth was a pitcher and then an outfielder for the Red Sox. In a 1916 World Series game against the Brooklyn Dodgers, he pitched 13 scoreless innings in a 14-inning game. The Red Sox won the game 2-1. His batting was even more amazing than his pitching. In 1919 he hit 29 home runs, breaking a record that had stood for 35 years.

Ruth was sold to the New York Yankees in January of 1920. In his first season as an outfielder for this club, he belted an incredible 54 home runs. Ruth's popularity soared. Thousands of avid fans came to the games, hoping to see him slam the ball into the bleachers. He drew so many fans that, in time, the Yankees could afford to build a stadium of their own. This new ballpark opened in 1923 and became known as "The House That Ruth Built."

Both on the field and off, Ruth had a colorful personality. He loved to eat and had a huge appetite. It's said that he once ate twelve hot dogs and drank eight sodas between games at a double header. He also loved children and spent endless hours visiting kids in hospitals and orphanages. Often acting like a kid himself, he became instant friends with his young fans.

One of the greatest sluggers of his time, Ruth set his famous record of 60 single-season home runs in 1927. In a game on May 25, 1935, days before he retired, he hit three homers, ending his 22 seasons as a major leaguer with 714 career home runs. This record remained unbroken for 39 years. In recognition of his exceptional talent, Babe Ruth was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ Pd: _____

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. In the first paragraph, George Ruth is described as an unruly son." Which of these is the best antonym for *unruly*?
 A. handsome B. weak C. well-behaved D. clumsy
2. Why did George Ruth's parents send their son to the St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys?
 A. They wanted him to learn how to play baseball.
 B. They wanted him to learn about the Catholic religion.
 C. They wanted him to learn about different industries.
 D. They were tired of trying to handle his bad behavior.
3. In what year did Ruth become a major league baseball player?
 A. 1916 B. 1914 C. 1919 D. 1920
4. For what team was Ruth playing in 1916?
 A. the Brooklyn Dodgers B. the Boston Red Sox
 C. the Baltimore Orioles D. the New York Yankees
5. In paragraph five, it describes Ruth's fans as avid. Which of these is the best synonym for *avid*?
 A. enthusiastic B. jealous C. amused D. clever
6. Why did so many fans come to the Yankee games in the early 1920s?
 A. They wanted to sit in the bleachers.
 B. They wanted to see Babe Ruth pitch scoreless innings.
 C. They wanted to eat lots of hot dogs and drink lots of sodas.
 D. They wanted to see Babe Ruth hit a home run.
7. Based on what you read, which of these do you think Ruth would have been likely to order for breakfast in a restaurant?
 A. two slices of toast with butter and jam
 B. a bowl of cereal with milk and sliced bananas
 C. a steak, six fried eggs, and potatoes on the side
 D. three pancakes with syrup and fresh strawberries
8. Which of the following statements about Babe Ruth is true?
 A. He learned to be an outstanding outfielder at St. Mary's.
 B. He was named "Babe" by his parents.
 C. He played major league baseball for 39 seasons.
 D. He set a new record by hitting 60 home runs in 1927.

RCP #B