

Fact or Fiction?

Name: _____

Below is a biography on Roberto Clemente. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

Early Life

Roberto Clemente Walker was born on August 18, 1934, in Barrio San Anton, Carolina, Puerto Rico. He was the youngest of seven children. His father was a foreman who oversaw sugarcane cutters and helped deliver sand and gravel for a construction company. His mother did laundry, ran a grocery store, and did other jobs on the sugarcane plantation. Roberto did odd jobs so he could help the family and buy himself a bicycle. Growing up, Roberto played baseball and participated in track and field. He won medals for the javelin throw and short distance races. Throwing the javelin strengthened his arm for throwing a baseball.

Baseball Career

At age 18, Roberto joined a Puerto Rican professional baseball team, the Cangrejeros de Santurce, where he played with Willie Mays in 1954. That year, Santurce won the Caribbean World Series. Roberto was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1954. He played on a minor league team for a season before being chosen in the draft by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Roberto quickly made a major impact in both the Pirates and Major League Baseball. He played outfield with the Pirates from 1955 to 1972. He was selected for the National League All-Star team 15 times, won 12 Gold Glove Awards, and won four National League batting titles. He was the National League Most Valuable Player in 1966 and the World Series Most Valuable Player in 1971. His career batting average was .317 with 3,000 hits, 240 home runs, and 1,305 RBIs.

Humanitarian Efforts

Roberto was known for his humanitarian efforts. He helped people in need across the United States and Central America and held free baseball clinics for children in Puerto Rico. In 1972, an earthquake struck Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. Roberto had managed a Puerto Rican all-star team in Managua, and he had friends there. He became the honorary chairman of an earthquake relief committee that raised \$150,000 and gathered nearly 26 tons of relief supplies. Tragically, on New Year's Eve, he died when the plane he was on to deliver the supplies crashed into the Atlantic Ocean.

Major League Baseball Makes a Noble Exception

Normally, a player cannot be inducted into the Baseball Hall-of-Fame until at least five years after he stopped playing. An exception was made for Roberto, and he was inducted in 1973. He was the first Hispanic player to be inducted to the Hall-of-Fame. After his death, Major League Baseball established the Roberto Clemente Award recognizing the player who combines outstanding skills on the field with devoted work in the community. Broadcaster Tim McCarver called Roberto, "the greatest right fielder of all time, because of his precise and powerful throwing arm. Roberto once said, "If you have a chance to accomplish something that will make things better for people coming behind you, and you don't do that, you are wasting your time on this earth." Roberto also said, "I want to be remembered as a ballplayer who gave all he had to give."

	FACT	FICTION
Roberto Clemente was born in Puerto Rico.		
Roberto Clemente was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall-of-Fame earlier than he was actually eligible.		
Roberto Clemente was an American League All-Star 15 times!		
Roberto Clemente had exactly 3,000 hits in his career.		
Roberto Clemente tragically died on New Year's Day.		
Roberto Clemente was the first Hispanic player inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall-of-Fame.		
Roberto Clemente played his entire Major League career with the Pittsburgh Pirates.		
Roberto threw the javelin as a kid.		
Roberto Clemente played first base when he was on the Pittsburgh Pirates.		
Roberto Clemente played on the same team as Willie Mays when he played in Puerto Rico.		
Roberto Clemente died bringing relief supplies to people who had been through an earthquake in Puerto Rico.		

Answers

	FACT	FICTION
Roberto Clemente was born in Puerto Rico.	X	
Roberto Clemente was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall-of-Fame earlier than he was actually eligible.	X	
Roberto Clemente was an American League All-Star 15 times!		X
Roberto Clemente had exactly 3,000 hits in his career.	X	
Roberto Clemente tragically died on New Year's Day.		X
Roberto Clemente was the first Hispanic player inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall-of-Fame.	X	
Roberto Clemente played his entire Major League career with the Pittsburgh Pirates.	X	
Roberto threw the javelin as a kid.	X	
Roberto Clemente played first base when he was on the Pittsburgh Pirates.		X
Roberto Clemente played on the same team as Willie Mays when he played in Puerto Rico.	X	
Roberto Clemente died bring relief supplies to people who had been through an earthquake in Puerto Rico.		X