



MICKEY MANTLE Reading Comprehension

Mickey Mantle was born on October 20, 1931, in Spavinaw, Oklahoma. When he was four, his family moved to Commerce, Oklahoma, where he spent the rest of his childhood. His dad taught him how to play baseball and how to be switch hitter (bat right-handed and left-handed). Mickey was an outstanding athlete from an early age. He played baseball, basketball, and football in high school. A high school football injury to his leg resulted in an infection that nearly necessitated its amputation. Although the infection eventually subsided, he would suffer from its effects for the rest of his life.

Mickey was drafted by the New York Yankees at age 18. He was so talented that he was almost immediately called up from the minor leagues to the Yankees. Yankees management believed he would be the next great Yankees star and gave him the number "6" (Babe Ruth was 3, Lou Gehrig was 4, and Joe DiMaggio was 5). The pressure on the 20-year-old kid from Oklahoma was intense. Mickey played poorly in his first stint in the Major Leagues and was sent back to the minors. It was a devastating setback to Mantle. He even thought of quitting. Nevertheless, he was soon called back up to the majors. This time, he wore the number "7." The rest, they say, is history.

Mickey Mantle went on to enjoy an incredible baseball career as the Yankees starting center fielder for 18 years. He was one of the most popular athletes in sports history. Kids and adults alike, throughout the nation, idolized "The Mick." He played for the New York Yankees from 1951–1968. During that time, he hit 536 home runs, several of which are said to be among the longest in history. He was a 16-time All-Star and won three American League MVP (Most Valuable Player) awards. He played on seven World Championship Yankee teams, and still holds the Major League record for World Series home runs (18), RBIs (40), and runs scored (42). In 1956, Mickey Mantle became the last person to win the Major League Triple Crown, hitting 52 home runs, batting .353, and knocking in 130 runs (RBIs). Injuries to Mickey's legs eventually caught up with him. He retired on March 1, 1969. He was inducted in the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974. His number "7" was retired by the Yankees.

Behind the scenes, however, Mickey Mantle's life was turbulent. Years of alcoholism eventually destroyed his liver. In June of 1995, he received a liver transplant. On August 13, 1995, however, Mickey Mantle died. The words "A Great Teammate" are etched on his tombstone. Mickey Mantle is honored on a 2006 U.S. postage stamp. Today, his popularity lives on. His baseball cards are worth more than virtually any other athlete (except Babe Ruth). His 1952 rookie card has sold for as much as \$50,000 in mint condition.

1.) Where did Mickey Mantle spend most of his childhood?

- a.) Spavinaw
- b.) New York
- c.) Commerce
- d.) Texas

2.) What is a switch hitter?

- a.) Someone who switches position in the batting order.
- b.) Someone who bats left-handed and right-handed.
- c.) Someone who hits a lot of home runs.
- d.) Someone who switches positions in the outfield.

3.) Why did Mickey Mantle originally get the number "6"?

- a.) He had six brothers and sisters.
- b.) Because it was his favorite number.
- c.) The Yankees thought he was the next in line of great Yankee stars.
- d.) The Yankees wanted him to bat sixth in the lineup.

4.) Which of the following in NOT true?

- a.) Joe DiMaggio wore number 5.
- b.) Babe Ruth wore number 6.
- c.) Mickey Mantle wore number 7.
- d.) Lou Gehrig wore number 4.

5.) Which of the following is NOT true about Mickey Mantle?

- a.) Mickey played center field for the Yankees from 1951–1986.
- b.) He hit over 500 home runs.
- c.) Mickey Mantle was known to hit some of the longest home runs in history.
- d.) Mickey made 16 All-Star games.

6.) How many MVP awards did Mickey Mantle win?

- a.) 3
- b.) 4
- c.) 6
- d.) 7

7.) Which of the following IS true about Mickey Mantle?

- a.) He holds the World Series record of 40 runs scored.
- b.) He holds the World Series record of 40 RBIs
- c.) He holds the World Series record of 42 home runs.
- d.) He holds the World Series record of 42 stolen bases.

8.) What happened second?

- a.) 1972
- b.) Mickey was given the number "7."
- c.) Mickey retired from baseball.
- d.) Mickey Mantle won the Triple Crown.

9.) Which of the following likely affected Mickey's career and life? Select all that apply.

- a.) His postage stamp
- b.) Alcohol
- c.) His injured leg
- d.) His jersey number

10.) Which of the following best describes what "turbulent" means in the context of this passage?

- a.) faithful
- b.) relaxed
- c.) difficult
- d.) careless