

HANK AARON Reading Comprehension

Hank Aaron was born February 5, 1934, in Mobile, Alabama. He was the third of eight children. When his father took him to hear a speech given by Jackie Robinson, Hank committed himself to playing baseball. Aaron showed an early propensity for sports and played both baseball and football at Central High School in Mobile and Josephine Allen Institute, a private school. Aaron started playing semi-pro baseball at age 15 and earned \$10 per day playing for the Mobile Black Bears, an all-black baseball team. In 1951, Aaron was signed by the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro Baseball League. In 1952, he helped his team to the Negro League World Series.

Aaron became the last Negro League player to make the jump to the Major Leagues when he was signed by the Boston Braves in 1952. By the time that Aaron reached the Majors, the Boston Braves had become the Milwaukee Braves. Aaron played brilliantly in the minor leagues and even became MVP of the South-Atlantic League despite being the constant target of prejudice. In 1954, the Boston Braves called him up to the Major Leagues when left-fielder Bobby Thompson broke his ankle.

Despite going 0–5 in his major league debut (no hits in five at-bats), Aaron was in the Majors to stay. During his first year, he batted .280 (this means he would average 28 hits per 100 at-bats) with 13 home runs. These totals were among the lowest of his amazing career. In 1955, Aaron made his first of 24 All-Star games and batted .314 with 27 home runs. Hank would hit 20 or more home runs for 20 consecutive years. The next year, in Aaron's third year in the Majors, he won the batting title with a .328 average. He was also named the Sporting News National League Player of the Year. 1957 would become one of the best years of his career. After being switched to cleanup (fourth in the batting order), Aaron responded with 44 home runs and 132 RBI's (runs batted in—this means that as a result of something he did with the bat, like get a hit, sacrifice fly, ground out, or walk, a player(s) on his team scored). That year, he led the Milwaukee Braves to their only World Series title. In the years following the World Series, the Milwaukee Braves never again reached the playoffs. Nevertheless, Aaron continued to establish himself as one of the game's great hitters and began amassing impressive batting statistics. In 1962, the Milwaukee Braves moved to Atlanta and became the Atlanta Braves.

Despite the move to Atlanta, the Braves never made another World Series during Aaron's career. Many fans in Atlanta, however, were satisfied by watching Hank's on-field heroics. In 1970, Hank became the first player in history to get 3,000 hits and 500 home runs in a career. By the end of 1973, he had accumulated 713 home runs. He was only two away from eclipsing the most hallowed record in American sports—Babe Ruth's career home run record. On April 4, 1974, at the age of 40, Aaron hit a pitch from Los Angeles Dodger pitcher Al Downing over the left field fence in Atlanta's Fulton County Stadium. He had broken Babe Ruth's record. To this day, one of the most memorable highlights in sports history is the image of Aaron's rounding second base with two fans running after him trying to congratulate him. After the 1974 season, Hank played two more years with the Milwaukee Brewers. He ended his career with 755 home runs (the record still stands but is in jeopardy of being broken by Barry Bonds). He remains the all-time leader in RBIs with 2,297. On August 1, 1982, Hank Aaron was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. Both the Braves and Brewers retired (which means no one can wear it again) his uniform number "44." Today, Turner Field (Atlanta's new stadium) is located at 755 Hank Aaron Drive SE.

1.) How many younger brothers and sisters did Hank Aaron have?

- a.) 3
- b.) 4
- c.) 5
- d.) 6

2.) Which of the following baseball teams did Hank Aaron not play for?

- a.) Indianapolis Clowns
- b.) Boston Brewers
- c.) Atlanta Braves
- d.) Milwaukee Brewers

3.) When Hank Aaron made the major leagues, the Boston Braves had become the...

- a.) Boston Brewers
- b.) Milwaukee Brewers
- c.) Indianapolis Clowns
- d.) Milwaukee Braves

4.) What does "debut" mean?

- a.) His last appearance
- b.) His first appearance
- c.) A bad appearance
- d.) A good appearance

5.) How many home runs did Hank Aaron hit his first year?

- a.) 27
- b.) 44
- c.) 32
- d.) 13

6.) Which of the following must be true?

- a.) Hank hit at least 20 home runs in 1977.
- b.) Hank hit at least 20 home runs in 1952.
- c.) Hank hit at least 20 home runs in 1960.
- d.) All of the answers are correct.

7.) What phrase would describe Hank Aaron's batting statistics during his first year in the major leagues?

- a.) Uncharacteristically low
- b.) Uncharacteristically high
- c.) About average
- d.) Very high

8.) In 1955, Aaron...

- a.) made his first All-Star Game.
- b.) batted .314.
- c.) hit 27 home runs.
- d.) All of the answers are correct.

9.) How many times was Hank Aaron on a team that won the World Series?

- a.) 0
- b.) 1
- c.) 2
- d.) 3

10.) What happened last?

- a.) Hank Aaron hit his 755th home run.
- b.) Hank Aaron was elected into the Hall of Fame.
- c.) April 4, 1974
- d.) Hank joined the Milwaukee Brewers.