

## Curse of the Bambino Reading Comprehension

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Baseball is a Superstitious Game

Baseball is famous for its superstitions and superstitious players. Some players name their bats for good luck, others follow strict rituals when they're hitting, still others refuse to shave or change their socks when they're doing well. Perhaps the most celebrated superstition in baseball history is the infamous "Curse of the Bambino" which supposedly plagued the Boston Red Sox following their sale of the legendary slugger Babe Ruth, who was nicknamed "the Bambino."

### The Sale of Babe Ruth

Babe Ruth was originally a pitcher on the Boston Red Sox. With Ruth on the team, the Red Sox had enjoyed great success, winning five of the first fifteen World Series titles. In 1920, Red Sox owner Harry Frazee sold Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees, supposedly, at least in part, to finance the production of a Broadway play. Following the sale of Ruth, the fortunes of the two teams involved in the sale indeed changed drastically. Ruth would be considered one of the greatest baseball players of all time and would become one of the biggest celebrities on the planet. The Yankees would go on to play in 39 World Series, winning 26 of them. During the same time, the Red Sox played in only four World Series and lost all of them.

### The Fall of the Red Sox

Over the years, bad luck seemed to plague the Red Sox. For example, in 1986, the Red Sox were one out away from winning the World Series against the New York Mets, when a simple ground ball inexplicably rolled through the legs of Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner, which allowed the Mets to rally and win the game. The Mets would win Game 7 and thus the World Series. By this time, many Red Sox fans believed they were cursed and the term "Curse of the Bambino" was popularized in books and in the media. Entire generations of Red Sox fans lived their lives without experiencing the joy of their team winning a World Series. Yankees fans would taunt Red Sox fans by wearing shirt emblazoned with "1918" - the last year in which the Red Sox won a World Series.

### The Shocking End of the Curse

Even curses don't last forever. Finally, in 2004, the Red Sox defeated the New York Yankees in the American League Championship Series and then the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series. In the series, the Cardinals built a three games to zero lead. The Red Sox became the first team in baseball history to win a World Series after losing the first three games. Coincidentally, Cardinals batter Edgar Renteria made the last out for the Cardinals. He wore uniform number "3," the same number as Babe Ruth.

- 1. Which of the following best describes the Red Sox before the team sold Babe Ruth?**
  - A. An average team
  - B. A very successful team
  - C. A very unsuccessful team
  - D. A team that was successful; but that had never won a World Series

- 2. What does the author mean by the quote below?**

“Following the sale of Ruth, the fortunes of the two teams involved in the sale indeed changed drastically.”

- A. He meant that both the Red Sox and Yankees would struggle in years to come**
  - B. He meant that the Red Sox would come upon great success and the Yankees would struggle for many years**
  - C. He meant that the Yankees would enjoy great success and the Red Sox would struggle in years to come**
  - D. He meant that the Red Sox would eventually become a superstitious team**
- 3. Which of the following best serves as evidence that since the purchase of Babe Ruth, the New York Yankees benefitted greatly?**
    - A. New York Yankees fans would taunt Boston Red Sox fans with shirts labeled “1918”
    - B. Babe Ruth was a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox
    - C. The New York Yankees won 26 World Series
    - D. The Boston Red Sox failed to win a World Series from 1918-2004
  - 4. Which of the following is TRUE about the Boston Red Sox?**
    - A. The team won 15 World Series before it sold Babe Ruth
    - B. The team won its first World Series in 1920
    - C. The team won a World Series in 2004
    - D. The team won 26 World Series after it sold Babe Ruth
  - 5. If an answer to a question is “the Red Sox defeat in the 1986 World Series,” what might the question be?**
    - A. Why did New York Yankees fans taunt Boston Red Sox fans?
    - B. When did the “Curse of the Bambino” end?
    - C. Who won the 1986 World Series?
    - D. What might be used as evidence that the Boston Red Sox was a cursed team?
  - 6. The 2004 Red Sox became the first team to...**
    - A. win a World Series after losing the first three games.
    - B. to defeat the New York Yankees in a World Series.
    - C. lose a World Series after winning the first three games.
    - D. to win an American League Championship and a World Series.

**7. Which of the following is NOT a superstition?**

- A. Refusing to walk under a ladder because you are sure it will result in you having bad luck for several years
- B. Making sure your black cat stays indoors during Halloween because you are concerned for its safety
- C. Tapping home plate three times to make sure you have a successful at-bat
- D. Making sure you don't step on a sidewalk crack so that no one in your family will break any bones