

Babe Ruth's Called Shot Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Game Three of the 1932 World Series

The setting was Chicago's Wrigley Field on October 1, 1932. It was the third game of the World Series between Ruth's Yankees and the Chicago Cubs. It was the fifth inning and the score was tied 4-4. Babe Ruth came to bat. He was being heckled by the Cubs players and fans and was jabbering back and forth with them. After the first strike, Ruth made some sort of pointing gesture. After the second strike, he made a similar pointing gesture to what seemed to be center field. On the next pitch, he blasted a majestic home run over the center field fence that landed at least 440 feet from home plate. The Yankees would go on to win the World Series, but the story of Game three would live on.

The Called Shot?

Ruth's home run may have simply died in the footnotes of baseball history had it not been for a headline in the New York World-Telegram that read "RUTH CALLS SHOT AS HE PUTS HOME RUN NO. 2 IN SIDE POCKET." It was written by sports journalist Joe Williams. Williams' description of the event was the first that referred to this "called shot." Soon, other stories appeared that referenced the "called shot" and thus a legend was born. While Ruth initially discounted the pointing gesture, as time went on, he became adamant that his pointing gesture was indeed intended to communicate where he was going to hit the ball. According to Ruth himself:

"While he was making up his mind to pitch to me I stepped back again and pointed my finger at those bleachers, which only caused the mob to howl that much more at me. Root threw me a fast ball. If I had let it go, it would have been called a strike. But this was it. I swung from the ground with everything I had and as I hit the ball every muscle in my system, every sense I had, told me that I had never hit a better one, that as long as I lived nothing would ever feel as good as this. I didn't have to look. But I did. That ball just went on and on and on and hit far up in the center-field bleachers in exactly the spot I had pointed to. To me, it was the funniest, proudest moment I had ever had in baseball. I jogged down toward first base, rounded it, looked back at the Cub bench and suddenly got convulsed with laughter."

A Mystery in Baseball History

Today, experts are in disagreement as to whether Ruth actually called his home run, or, was simply pointing at the pitcher. Several grainy videos and pictures exist, but still don't show conclusively what Ruth was pointing to. After this home run, the Citrus Candy Company posted a huge billboard overlooking Wrigley Field advertising their Baby Ruth candy bars.

1. At the time Ruth hit his “called shot” ...

- A. it was obvious the Yankees would win the game.
- B. it looked like the Cubs would win the game.
- C. the outcome of the game was uncertain.
- D. the Yankees had a big lead.

2. Which is NOT true?

- A. Ruth’s “called shot” occurred in the Game Four of the World Series
- B. Ruth’s “called shot” occurred in Chicago
- C. Ruth’s “called shot” sailed over the center field fence
- D. Ruth’s “called shot” traveled longer than most home runs

3. What is implied in the following sentence:

The Yankees would go on to win the World Series, but the story of Game three would live on.

- A. The Yankees won the World Series
- B. Babe Ruth would become a legend
- C. Babe Ruth’s “Called Shot” would be discussed for a long time
- D. Game 3 of the World Series was the most important game

4. At first...

- A. Babe Ruth acknowledged that he called his shot.
- B. Babe Ruth wanted people to think that he had called his shot.
- C. Babe Ruth didn’t know he had hit such an important home run.
- D. Babe Ruth didn’t seem to think it was important whether or not he called his shot.

5. Babe Ruth considered his called shot _____.

- A. funny
- B. important
- C. serious
- D. historic

6. Which word could replace “conclusively” in the following sentence?

Several grainy videos and pictures exist, but still don't show conclusively what Ruth was pointing to.

- A. ordinarily
- B. interestingly
- C. definitively
- D. sparingly

7. Why is Joe Williams important in the legend of Babe Ruth's Called Shot?

- A. He was the first journalist to claim that Ruth called his shot
- B. He was the first person to question whether or not Ruth actually called his shot
- C. He was the first person to see Babe Ruth point to center field
- D. He was the first person to provide evidence that Babe Ruth called his shot