Baseball and MLB Trivia Questions

4 rounds · 35 questions · about 50 min

How to run it

1. Print one host sheet for yourself and one team answer sheet per team. The host sheet has the key on it — keep it face down.
2. Three to five people per team, mixed if you can: a casual fan and a superfan remember different things.
3. Read each question twice, then give about thirty seconds.
4. Teams swap sheets at the end of each round and mark each other while you read the answers. One point for each correct answer.
5. The line under each answer on the host sheet is there to be read out once the answer is in.

ROUND 1 — Rules, Terminology & Positions

1. How many players from the defensive team are on the field at one time?

- **A** **9**
- B 8
- C 11
- D 7

Answer: A — 9

Worth adding: The nine defensive spots are pitcher, catcher, first, second and third basemen, shortstop, and left, center and right fielders — which is why each position also has a number from 1 to 9 on a scorecard.

2. How many strikes does it take to strike out a batter?

- A Two
- **B** **Three**
- C Five
- D Four

Answer: B — Three

Worth adding: Three strikes retire the batter, though a foul ball can be strike three only on a bunt or as a foul tip caught by the catcher.

3. What is a home run hit with the bases loaded called?

- A A squeeze play
- B A triple play
- C A cycle
- **D** **A grand slam**

Answer: D — A grand slam

Worth adding: It is the single most productive swing in baseball because all three runners plus the batter score, producing four runs at once.

4. How far apart are the bases on a standard MLB infield?

- A 60 feet
- B 100 feet
- **C 90 feet**
- D 75 feet

Answer: C — 90 feet

Worth adding: The 90-foot distance was fixed in the 1850s and has barely changed since, because it creates an almost perfect balance between a fast runner and a well-thrown ball.

5. How many innings make up a regulation MLB game?

- A Seven
- **B Nine**
- C Ten
- D Eight

Answer: B — Nine

Worth adding: Nine innings became the standard in 1857; if the score is tied after nine, the game simply continues into extra innings since baseball has no clock.

6. What is a batter awarded after taking four pitches outside the strike zone?

- A A hit by pitch
- B A balk
- C A sacrifice
- **D A walk (base on balls)**

Answer: D — A walk (base on balls)

Worth adding: It is officially scored a 'base on balls' and does not count as an at-bat, which is why walks lift on-base percentage but not batting average.

7. On a standard scorecard, which position is numbered 6?

- **A Shortstop**
- B Center fielder
- C Third baseman
- D Second baseman

Answer: A — Shortstop

Worth adding: Shortstop is 6, which is why a classic double play is written as 6-4-3: shortstop to second baseman to first baseman.

8. To throw a perfect game over nine innings, how many batters must a pitcher retire in a row?

- A 30
- B 33
- **C 27**
- D 24

Answer: C — 27

Worth adding: Three outs per inning times nine innings equals 27, and in a perfect game not a single batter may reach base by hit, walk or error.

9. Which three categories must a hitter lead his league in to win the Triple Crown?

- A Runs scored, triples and on-base percentage
- B Hits, doubles and stolen bases
- **C Batting average, home runs and runs batted in**
- D Home runs, walks and slugging percentage

Answer: C — Batting average, home runs and runs batted in

Worth adding: Leading in average, homers and RBI at once is extremely rare because the skills of contact hitting and raw power usually belong to different types of hitters.

10. In baseball slang, what is a 'can of corn'?

- A A runner caught stealing
- B A pitch that hits the batter
- C A bunt down the third-base line
- **D A high, easy fly ball to an outfielder**

Answer: D — A high, easy fly ball to an outfielder

Worth adding: The phrase is usually traced to old grocers who tipped cans off a high shelf and caught them in an apron — an easy, routine catch.

11. What is the illegal deceptive motion by a pitcher with runners on base called?

- A A pickle
- **B A balk**
- C A backdoor slider
- D A bunt

Answer: B — A balk

Worth adding: A balk penalizes the pitcher for faking a pitch or pickoff, and every runner on base advances one base as a result.

12. Which trophy is presented to the winner of the World Series?

- **A The Commissioner's Trophy**
- B The Stanley Cup
- C The Larry O'Brien Trophy
- D The Lombardi Trophy

Answer: A — The Commissioner's Trophy

Worth adding: First awarded in 1967, the Commissioner's Trophy is ringed by 30 gold-plated pennants, one for each MLB club, and unlike the Stanley Cup a brand-new one is made every year.

ROUND 2 — Ballparks, History & Famous Firsts

13. The 37-foot-high left field wall known as the 'Green Monster' stands in which ballpark?

- A Dodger Stadium
- B Wrigley Field
- **C Fenway Park**
- D Yankee Stadium

Answer: C — Fenway Park

Worth adding: Fenway Park opened in 1912 and the towering wall exists because the short left field had to be protected from cheap home runs on a cramped city block.

14. Which ballpark is famous for its ivy-covered outfield brick walls?

A Oracle Park

B Wrigley Field

C Fenway Park

D Citi Field

Answer: B — Wrigley Field

Worth adding: The ivy was planted at the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field in 1937, and a ball lost in the vines is ruled a ground-rule double.

15. Which stadium is nicknamed 'The House That Ruth Built'?

A Yankee Stadium

B Comiskey Park

C Shibe Park

D Ebbets Field

Answer: A — Yankee Stadium

Worth adding: Yankee Stadium opened in 1923 and got the nickname because the crowds Babe Ruth drew paid for it — and Ruth homered in its very first game.

16. Where is the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum located?

A Chicago, Illinois

B Louisville, Kentucky

C Boston, Massachusetts

D Cooperstown, New York

Answer: D — Cooperstown, New York

Worth adding: The Hall opened in Cooperstown in 1939 because of the long-disproven legend that Abner Doubleday invented baseball there in 1839.

17. In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier playing for which team?

A New York Giants

B Brooklyn Dodgers

C Cleveland Indians

D Boston Braves

Answer: B — Brooklyn Dodgers

Worth adding: Dodgers executive Branch Rickey signed Robinson, who debuted at first base on April 15, 1947 and went on to win the first Rookie of the Year Award.

18. Which uniform number has been retired by every MLB team in honor of Jackie Robinson?

A 7

B 3

C 42

D 24

Answer: C — 42

Worth adding: Number 42 was retired league-wide in 1997, and every player wears it once a year on Jackie Robinson Day, April 15.

19. Which award is officially named after Jackie Robinson?

- **A** **The Rookie of the Year Award**
- B The Gold Glove Award
- C The Most Valuable Player Award
- D The Cy Young Award

Answer: A — The Rookie of the Year Award

Worth adding: The Rookie of the Year Award was renamed the Jackie Robinson Award in 1987, fitting because Robinson himself won the inaugural version in 1947.

20. In what year was the first modern World Series played?

- A 1927
- B 1919
- C 1876
- **D** **1903**

Answer: D — 1903

Worth adding: In the 1903 best-of-nine series the Boston Americans beat the Pittsburgh Pirates, and no World Series was held at all in 1904 because the Giants refused to play.

21. In what year did the Dodgers play their first season in Los Angeles after leaving Brooklyn?

- A 1948
- B 1962
- C 1953
- **D** **1958**

Answer: D — 1958

Worth adding: The Dodgers moved west for the 1958 season alongside the Giants, who relocated to San Francisco, making MLB a truly coast-to-coast league.

22. In which year did the American League adopt the designated hitter rule?

- A 1969
- **B** **1973**
- C 1961
- D 1980

Answer: B — 1973

Worth adding: The AL introduced the DH in 1973 to boost offense, and the National League played without it for decades before the DH became universal.

23. Whose consecutive-games-played streak did Cal Ripken Jr. break in 1995?

- **A** **Lou Gehrig**
- B Honus Wagner
- C Ty Cobb
- D Stan Musial

Answer: A — Lou Gehrig

Worth adding: Gehrig's 2,130 straight games had stood since 1939, and Ripken passed it with game number 2,131 on September 6, 1995.

ROUND 3 — Legends of the Game

24. Which legendary slugger was nicknamed 'The Bambino' and 'The Sultan of Swat'?

- A Lou Gehrig
- B Jimmie Foxx
- **C Babe Ruth**
- D Ty Cobb

Answer: C — Babe Ruth

Worth adding: Babe Ruth earned the nicknames for his unprecedented power, and he began his career as a star left-handed pitcher for the Red Sox before becoming a full-time slugger.

25. Which player broke Babe Ruth's career home run record in 1974?

- A Frank Robinson
- B Willie Mays
- **C Hank Aaron**
- D Mickey Mantle

Answer: C — Hank Aaron

Worth adding: Aaron hit his 715th home run on April 8, 1974 for the Atlanta Braves, passing Ruth's mark of 714 despite receiving hate mail and death threats.

26. Which Hall of Fame outfielder was known as 'The Say Hey Kid'?

- **A Willie Mays**
- B Duke Snider
- C Roberto Clemente
- D Ernie Banks

Answer: A — Willie Mays

Worth adding: Willie Mays got the nickname from his habit of greeting people with 'Say hey!', and his over-the-shoulder catch in the 1954 World Series is simply called 'The Catch'.

27. Which first baseman, nicknamed 'The Iron Horse', delivered the famous 1939 'luckiest man on the face of the earth' farewell speech?

- A Hank Greenberg
- **B Lou Gehrig**
- C Jimmie Foxx
- D George Sisler

Answer: B — Lou Gehrig

Worth adding: Gehrig retired after being diagnosed with ALS, a disease now widely known in the United States as Lou Gehrig's disease.

28. Who set the MLB record with a 56-game hitting streak in 1941?

- A Ted Williams
- B Rogers Hornsby
- C Pete Rose
- **D Joe DiMaggio**

Answer: D — Joe DiMaggio

Worth adding: DiMaggio's 56-game streak ran from May to July 1941 and is considered nearly unbreakable; the same summer Ted Williams batted .406.

29. Which pitcher, after whom MLB's top pitching award is named, holds the all-time record of 511 career wins?

- A Grover Cleveland Alexander
- B Christy Mathewson
- **C Cy Young**
- D Walter Johnson

Answer: C — Cy Young

Worth adding: Cy Young also lost 316 games — both records are untouchable today because modern starters pitch roughly every fifth day instead of nearly every other day.

ROUND 4 — The Hard Six

30. Who became the first Black player in the American League when he debuted in July 1947?

- **A Larry Doby**
- B Monte Irvin
- C Satchel Paige
- D Roy Campanella

Answer: A — Larry Doby

Worth adding: Larry Doby joined the Cleveland Indians just 11 weeks after Jackie Robinson's NL debut, and in 1948 he helped Cleveland win the World Series.

31. Who threw the only perfect game in World Series history, in 1956?

- A Whitey Ford
- **B Don Larsen**
- C Sandy Koufax
- D Bob Gibson

Answer: B — Don Larsen

Worth adding: Yankees right-hander Don Larsen retired all 27 Brooklyn Dodgers in Game 5 on October 8, 1956 — the only no-hitter of any kind in World Series history.

32. Which pitcher holds the record with seven career no-hitters?

- A Sandy Koufax
- B Randy Johnson
- C Bob Feller
- **D Nolan Ryan**

Answer: D — Nolan Ryan

Worth adding: Nolan Ryan threw his seven no-hitters between 1973 and 1991 — three more than runner-up Sandy Koufax — and also holds the career strikeout record with 5,714.

33. The first night game in MLB history was played in 1935 at which ballpark?

- **A Crosley Field, Cincinnati**
- B Sportsman's Park, St. Louis
- C Braves Field, Boston
- D Forbes Field, Pittsburgh

Answer: A — Crosley Field, Cincinnati

Worth adding: On May 24, 1935 the Cincinnati Reds hosted the Phillies under the lights at Crosley Field, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressing a button in Washington to switch them on.

34. Who in 2019 became the first player ever elected to the Hall of Fame by unanimous vote of the writers?

- A Greg Maddux
- **B Mariano Rivera**
- C Derek Jeter
- D Ken Griffey Jr.

Answer: B — Mariano Rivera

Worth adding: Closer Mariano Rivera appeared on all 425 ballots in 2019; even Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were left off some ballots in the inaugural 1936 vote.

35. Under the infield fly rule, which base-runner situation must exist (with fewer than two outs) for the rule to apply?

- A A runner on first base only
- B A runner on third base only
- **C Runners on first and second, or bases loaded**
- D Any runner anywhere on base

Answer: C — Runners on first and second, or bases loaded

Worth adding: The rule exists to stop fielders from intentionally dropping an easy pop-up to turn a cheap double or triple play, so it applies only when a force play at third is in order.