

El Magnífico

Exploring the life and legacy of legendary baseball player Roberto Clemente

About the Story

Lexile: 880L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to write an essay synthesizing information from two articles

Key Skills: figurative language, character, author's craft, inference, key ideas and details, synthesizing

Essential Questions:

- What makes someone a hero?
- What is a legacy?
- What effect does discrimination have on society?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, R.9, W.1, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-alouds
- Vocabulary
- Text-to-speech

Connected readings from the

Scope Archives:

- Drama: Go!
- Drama: *When Girls Ruled Baseball*
- Paired Texts: "The Fastest Woman in the World" and "Climbing Toward a Better World"

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Preparing to Write: Roberto Clemente's Legacy
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Core Skills Workout: Text Structure, Text Evidence*
- Choice Board
- Quiz*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

15 minutes

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project or screen share the activity **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. (Optionally, have students complete the practice activity for homework.) Highlighted words: *candidly, heritage, humanitarian, inducted, milestone, press, prestigious, rallied*

2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

“El Magnífico”

- Have a volunteer read the **As You Read** box that appears on page 21 of the magazine and at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once through as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the **audio read-aloud** of the article while they follow along. The audio read-aloud is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Have students reread the article silently. Then pose the following close-reading questions to the class. Have students share their thinking with a partner first, then expand the share into a whole-class discussion.

Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. In the introduction of the article, author Mary Kate Frank writes, “Clemente had beaten tough odds before.” What does it mean to “beat the odds”? How had Clemente beaten the odds in his life? (figurative language) *To “beat the odds” is to succeed despite not having a good chance of succeeding—to be faced with difficult obstacles and overcome them. As a Black*

man from Puerto Rico joining Major League Baseball in 1955—a period Frank later describes as a “shameful time in American history”—Clemente faced racism, segregation, and discrimination throughout his career. Despite these obstacles, he became a legendary player.

2. **Frank writes of Clemente’s performance on the field, “Most of all, he played with dignity.” What does she mean?** (character) *Frank means that even more admirable than Clemente’s skills was the way he conducted himself on the field: He played in a way that was worthy of honor and respect and showed the sense of pride he had in himself.*
3. **In the section “Far From Home,” cheering fans crowd around Clemente as he leaves the stadium after a big game. Why do you think Frank highlights this moment? How is it important to the story?** (author’s craft) *This moment was a turning point in Clemente’s career. The Pittsburgh Pirates had finally won the World Series, thanks in large part to Clemente’s contributions. Before this game, Clemente had mostly been treated like an outsider. But after this victory, it was clear that the Pittsburgh fans respected him and that his skills were no longer overlooked.*
4. **Why was it significant that Clemente spoke to reporters in Spanish after he was named MVP in 1971?** (inference) *Clemente had been disrespected by the press for years because of his accent and Puerto Rican heritage. When he delivered a blessing in Spanish, he was not only communicating with his family back in Puerto Rico but also displaying his pride in his heritage, which likely filled Puerto Ricans and Latinos across the Americas with immense pride as well. Note: La bendición (“the blessing”) is a cultural tradition practiced by many Latinos across the Americas in which individuals ask for the blessing of their parents, grandparents, and respected elders.*
5. **How did Clemente use baseball as a platform—in other words, as an opportunity to voice his views or take action?** (key ideas and details) *Clemente used his fame, money, and talent to help others and make the world a better place. He spoke out about racial injustice during his interviews, he provided free baseball lessons to kids in Puerto Rico, he mentored new Caribbean MLB players, he advocated for civil rights, and he was a great humanitarian. Before tragically dying at the age of 38, he was planning to devote the rest of his life to serving others.*
6. **What is the Roberto Clemente Award? For what reasons do you think Major League Baseball gives out this award?** (inference) *The Roberto Clemente Award is an award given every year to players who give back to their communities. MLB gives out this award to recognize players who go above and beyond their duties as baseball players and work to make a difference in the world. It’s a way MLB encourages players to use their influence for good. It’s also a way MLB honors the memory of Clemente, who was a hero to many and who died at a young age.*

“Should No. 21 Be Retired?”

- Read the article as a class. Optionally, have students listen to author Mackenzie Carro read the article aloud while they follow along. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Discuss the following critical-thinking questions, the first of which applies to both articles.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. Jackie Robinson once said, “I’m not concerned with your liking or disliking me . . . All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.” How does this connect to Roberto Clemente’s story? *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that like Jackie Robinson, Clemente also expected to be treated with dignity. After experiencing segregation in the U.S. for the first time, Clemente spoke out against the injustice. He confronted the Pirates organization, saying, “If I’m good enough to play here, I have to be good enough to be treated like the rest of the players.” When disrespected by the press, he called them out about it. He said he was proud to be Black and Puerto Rican. He also used his interviews as a platform for talking about racial injustice.*
2. Frank writes of the press, “They mispronounced his name or called him ‘Bob’ or ‘Bobby,’ which Clemente found insulting.” Why was this insulting to Clemente? Why might mispronouncing someone’s name or calling them by another name be harmful? What can a person do if they don’t know how to say an unfamiliar name? *Answers will vary. Students will likely say that for Clemente, being called “Bob” or “Bobby” was disrespectful to his heritage. A person’s name is key to their identity, so mispronouncing it or changing it ignores—or worse, mocks—that identity. Changing an unfamiliar name to a name belonging to the dominant culture, as the press did when they referred to Roberto Clemente as “Bob” or “Bobby,” also sends the message that the person’s culture is viewed as unacceptable. If someone’s name is unfamiliar to you and you’re unsure of how to pronounce it, you could admit you’re having difficulty and ask for assistance. If you hear someone mispronounce another person’s name, you could teach them the correct pronunciation.*

3. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Roberto Clemente's Legacy**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the prompt on page 25 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story article.
- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated culminating activities.

Other inspiring sports stories from the *Scope* archives:

- Drama: [Go!](#) (February 2021)
- Drama: [When Girls Ruled Baseball](#) (March 2016)
- Paired Texts: ["The Fastest Woman in the World" and "Climbing Toward a Better World"](#) (May 2021)