

REMEMBER WHEN - APRIL 23, 1954

Hank Aaron Hits First Home Run of His MLB Career

On April 23, 1954, Hank Aaron knocks out the first home run of his Major League Baseball career. Twenty years later, Aaron becomes baseball's new home run king when he broke Babe Ruth's long-standing record of 714 career homers.

A native of Mobile, Alabama, Aaron began his professional baseball career in 1952 in the Negro League and joined the Milwaukee Braves of the major leagues in 1954, eight years after Jackie Robinson had integrated baseball. Aaron was the last Negro League player to compete in the majors. He played his first game with the Braves on April 13 and went hitless in his five times at bat. Two days later, he got his first hit, a single, in a game against the St. Louis Cardinals, and on April 23, 1954, pounded out his first major league home run off Cardinals' pitcher Vic Raschi.

Aaron quickly established himself as an important player for the Braves and won the National League batting title in 1956. The following season, he took home the league's MVP award and helped the Braves beat Mickey Mantle and the heavily favored New York Yankees in the World Series. In 1959, Aaron won his second league batting title. Season after season, he turned in strong batting performances: "Hammerin' Hank" hit .300 or higher for 14 seasons and slugged at least 40 homers in eight separate seasons. In May 1970, he became the first player in baseball to record 500 homers and 3,000 hits. The achievement Aaron is best known for, though, is breaking Babe Ruth's record of 714 career home runs, which he did on April 8, 1974, at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, when he hit his 715th home run in the fourth inning of a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers. Aaron played for the Milwaukee Braves from 1954 to 1965 and then moved with the team to Atlanta in 1966. On February 29, 1972, the Atlanta Braves signed Aaron to a three-year, \$200,000 per year contract that made him baseball's best-paid player. In November 1974, the Braves traded Aaron to the Milwaukee Brewers, where he spent the final two seasons of his career. Aaron retired from baseball in 1976 with 755 career home runs, a record that stood until August 7, 2007, when it was broken by Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants.

Source: On This Day in History

HANK AARON HITS FIRST HOME RUN OF HIS MLB CAREER

A Matching Game

Major	Dodgers
Home	Robinson
Milwaukee	Mantle
Jackie	run
St. Louis	League
Mickey	Ruth
MVP	homers
New York	award
Hammerin'	Braves
Babe	Series
Los Angeles	Cardinals
San Francisco	Yankees
Barry	Giants
Career	title
World	Hank
Batting	Bonds

How many words can you make using the letters in **BASEBALL**? _____

"I don't feel right unless I have a sport to play or at least a way to work up a sweat."

Hank Aaron

ANSWERS

Matching

Major League, Home run, Milwaukee Braves, Jackie Robinson, St. Louis Cardinals, Mickey Mantle, MVP award, New York Yankees, Hammerin' Hank, Babe Ruth, Los Angeles Dodgers, Barry Bonds, Career homers, World Series, Batting title

Words in Words

Baseball

a, abase, able, alas, all, as, baa, babe, babel, babes, bale, bales, ball, balls, base, be, bell, bells, blab, blabs, ebb, ebbs, el, ell, ells, la, label, labels, labs, lea, leas, sable, salable, sale, sea, seal, sell, slab

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