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## LeBron's Winning Ways

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### Article

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**CLEVELAND, Ohio** (Achieve3000, March 7, 2017). The 2015–2016 National Basketball Association (NBA) season was good to LeBron James. It was equally rewarding for fans of the three-time NBA Most Valuable Player (MVP), and for the city of Cleveland, Ohio, where on June 19, 2016, James led the Cavaliers to win the city's first major league title in 52 years. The victory was the realization of a goal James had set long before—to bring sports glory to his home state of Ohio.

In the finals, James rallied the Cavaliers from a 3–1 shortfall to defeat the favored Golden State Warriors from Oakland, California, who had won 73 games during the regular season. The turning point happened in Game 5, when James scored 41 points. He matched that point total in Game 6 and then made a key block in the final minutes of an epic Game 7. The Cavs became the first of Cleveland's major sports franchises to win a title since the National Football League's Browns in 1964.

For James, the title was the fulfillment of a promise he'd made to Cleveland, which isn't far from his hometown of Akron, Ohio. James, who had played for the Cavaliers for seven straight seasons beginning in 2003, angered Cleveland fans when he left Ohio to play for Florida's Miami Heat in 2010. Fans accused James of abandoning them in search of a title, something he hadn't been able to win with the Cavaliers, despite being considered one of the best players in the NBA. The Heat, which had big talents like Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh on its roster, was a more solid bet for wins. Sure enough, the Heat won two titles during James' tenure on the team. Some predicted that James could have won a third title with the Heat. But in 2014, the 6-foot 8-inch (203-centimeter) powerhouse decided to return to the Cavaliers. More experienced than before, James hoped to bring his winning ways to Cleveland.

"When I left Cleveland [in 2010], I was on a mission," James wrote in a 2014 essay for *Sports Illustrated*. "I was seeking championships, and we won two. But Miami already knew that feeling. [Cleveland] hasn't had that feeling in a long, long, long time. My goal is still to win as many titles as possible, no question. But what's most important for me is bringing one trophy back to Northeast Ohio."

When James announced his return, Cleveland appeared to forgive him for having left years before. Car horns blared, and strangers high-fived on the sidewalks outside the arena where James had so many big moments during his first seven seasons as a pro. Ohioans' love of basketball—and their belief in James, which had started when he was a star on his high school team—is what lured him back to Cleveland.

"Before anyone ever cared where I would play basketball, I was a kid from Northeast Ohio," James said in 2014. "People there have seen me grow up. I sometimes feel like I'm their son. Their passion can be overwhelming. But it drives me."



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AP/Ron Schwane

*LeBron James (23) of the Cleveland Cavaliers dunks during the NBA Finals in June 2016. Not only is James a top NBA basketball player, but he also feels a responsibility to help others.*

The year 2016 brought James praise from many quarters, including *Sports Illustrated*. James was named the magazine's Sportsman of the Year. Magazine officials said that their decision was based as much on James the person as on James the athlete. He had gone back to Cleveland knowing it could be years before he would ever see another championship. His return was based on a deep connection to his home state and an understanding of how meaningful his presence there would be at a time when northeastern Ohio had been scarred by economic woes. James became involved in the local community, *Sports Illustrated* officials pointed out, supporting causes that were important to him. He spoke out for racial equality, for example. He also ran a program that provided some young people with mentors to help them finish high school and graduate from the University of Akron. *Sports Illustrated* representatives said James was proof of the fact that sports can go beyond the actual competitions. James echoed this notion when he returned to Cleveland.

"I feel my calling here goes above basketball," James said in 2014. "I have a responsibility to lead, in more ways than one, and I take that very seriously. My presence can make a difference in Miami, but I think it can mean more where I'm from. In Northeast Ohio, nothing is given. Everything is earned. You work for what you have. I'm ready to accept the challenge. I'm coming home."

His home state is grateful that he did.

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

## **Dictionary**

**epic** (*adjective*) extending beyond the usual or ordinary, in size or scope

**franchise** (*noun*) a professional team

**mentor** (*noun*) someone who acts as a coach or guide

**tenure** (*noun*) how long someone keeps a job

**woe** (*noun*) a misfortune

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## Activity

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### PART 1

#### Question 1

Consider this quote from the Article:

**"Before anyone ever cared where I would play basketball, I was a kid from Northeast Ohio," James said in 2014. "People there have seen me grow up. I sometimes feel like I'm their son. Their passion can be overwhelming. But it drives me."**

In light of the main ideas of this Article, what caused LeBron James to make such a public statement?

- Ⓐ He hoped to encourage people to raise their children in Northeast Ohio, which would help boost the economy there.
- Ⓑ He felt a need to explain why he left the Cavaliers to play for the Miami Heat.
- Ⓒ He was explaining why he ran a program that provided mentors to young people.
- Ⓓ He wanted people to understand why, as one of the most talented NBA stars in the league, he chose to go back to Cleveland.

#### Question 2

Which of these is **most** important to include in a summary of this Article?

- Ⓐ In 2016, Cleveland fans found they were able to forgive LeBron James for moving to Florida.
- Ⓑ In 2016, LeBron James led the Cleveland Cavaliers to win the city's first major league title in 52 years.
- Ⓒ When LeBron James announced that he would be returning to Cleveland, car horns blared and strangers high-fived outside a sports arena.
- Ⓓ LeBron James has played basketball with some talented players, like Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh.

#### Question 3

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *mentor*, as it is used in the Article?

- Ⓐ Athlete
- Ⓑ Spectator
- Ⓒ Advisor
- Ⓓ Pupil

#### Question 4

According to the Article, which of these happened *second*?

*This question asks about when events happened. It does not ask where in the Article the events appear. Look back at the Article for clues, such as dates.*

- (A) LeBron James and his teammates on the Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the Golden State Warriors to win the NBA championship.
- (B) LeBron James and his Miami Heat teammates won an NBA title.
- (C) LeBron James completed his seventh season as a member of the Cleveland Cavaliers.
- (D) LeBron James was named the *Sports Illustrated* Sportsperson of the Year for his achievements on and off the basketball court.

Question 5

Based on the Article, the reader can infer that \_\_\_\_\_.

- (A) LeBron James returned to the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2014 because the team offered him more money than the Miami Heat could afford to pay him.
- (B) Sports fans in Ohio are even more excited about professional football than they are about professional basketball.
- (C) Players Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh have both volunteered as mentors in Akron, Ohio.
- (D) LeBron James believes that it is important for young people to finish high school.

Question 6

The Article states:

**James, who had played for the Cavaliers for seven straight seasons beginning in 2003, angered Cleveland fans when he left Ohio to play for Florida's Miami Heat in 2010. Fans accused James of *abandoning* them in search of a title, something he hadn't been able to win with the Cavaliers, despite being considered one of the best players in the NBA.**

Which would be the closest **synonym** for the word *abandoning*, as it is used above?

- (A) Endorsing
- (B) Consulting
- (C) Deserting
- (D) Moderating

Question 7

Which of these is a statement of fact?

- (A) LeBron James' decision to leave the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2010 to play for the Miami Heat was a reasonable one.
- (B) LeBron James was obviously a promising basketball player from the first time that he stepped on the court as a child.
- (C) LeBron James scored more than 40 points in two of the seven final games to help the Cavaliers win the NBA title in 2016.
- (D) LeBron James' most valuable contribution to his community has been his program that provides young people with mentors.

Question 8

Which quote from the Article best supports the idea that LeBron James found positive ways to use his star status to benefit others?

- Ⓐ Ohioans' love of basketball—and their belief in James, which had started when he was a star on his high school team—is what lured him back to Cleveland.
- Ⓑ He spoke for racial equality, for example. He also ran a program that provided some young people with mentors to help them finish high school and graduate from the University of Akron.
- Ⓒ The Heat, which had big talents like Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh on its roster, was a more solid bet for wins. Sure enough, the Heat won two titles during James' tenure on the team.
- Ⓓ The year 2016 brought James praise from many quarters, including *Sports Illustrated*. James was named the magazine's Sportsperson of the Year.