

Present Perfect: Wayne Gretzky

READING
TEXT

Each country has its own national pastime. Brazilians play soccer. Americans love baseball and football. What sport do Canadians love? Hockey! And who is Canada's most famous hockey player? Wayne Gretzky! For years, Gretzky has been a hero for children who dream of becoming a great hockey player. As a hockey legend, his records and accomplishments are unsurpassed. He is hockey's all-time goal and point scorer. He has been "the Face of Hockey" for more than two decades.

Wayne Gretzky was born on January 26, 1961 in Brantford, Ontario. When he was three years old, he learned to skate. When he was six, his father built a skating rink in their backyard. The young Gretzky skated for hours and hours, practicing his skating, shooting and stick handling. He soon started to play in hockey leagues and often played with boys who were years older than he was. In a few years, he set scoring records that seemed impossible. For example in one season he scored 378 goals. People called him the "White Tornado" because he skated so quickly.

In 1978, Gretzky represented Canada internationally for the first time at the World Junior Championships. As a 16-year-old, he led the whole tournament in scoring and was named MVP (the Most Valuable Player). Gretzky turned professional at 17 and played with the World Hockey Association (WHA). With the Edmonton Oilers, Gretzky's legendary professional career began. Gretzky was named WHA Rookie of the Year Award after scoring 46 goals and 110 points. Fans gave him standing ovations for his passing and stick handling.

In 1979, the Oilers became part of the National Hockey League (NHL). Gretzky started slowly, but eventually managed to score 51 goals. He became the youngest player in NHL history to score more than 50 goals. His lightning-quick speed and puck handling skills won him fans everywhere. During his first year he led the league in scoring points. He was the first rookie player to win the Hart Trophy.

The next year, 1980-81, Gretzky won the first of seven straight scoring titles and broke the legendary Bobby Orr's record of assists with 109. The following year, he crushed Phil Esposito's record of most goals in a single year by scoring 92 goals. That year he also scored a record five goals in a single game and ended the year with 212 points. This was the first of four times he

Intermediate 1 – Reading Exercise 4 – Present Perfect: Wayne Gretzky

would score more than 200 points. He is still the only player in the league's history to have scored more than 200 points in a single season.

Gretzky's style was unique and unbeatable. The area behind the opponent's team was called "Gretzky's Office" because it was from there that he made so many perfect passes for goals. Gretzky won the scoring championship almost every year for the first 12 years of his career. He also led his team to four Stanley Cup championships. People called him "The Great One."

In 1988, Gretzky married film actress Janet Jones in August and was traded to the Los Angeles Kings. While playing with L.A., Gretzky scored his 802nd goal to pass Gordie Howe as the all-time NHL leading scorer. He also scored his 1,852nd point and became the league's all-time point-scorer. At the end of the 1998-99 season, Gretzky announced his retirement. His final two games were emotionally difficult. When he retired, the NHL also retired his number 99 to ensure no one else would ever wear it. He ended his career with 894 goals, 1,963 assists and 2,857 points. He won the Art Ross Trophy (leading scorer) 10 times, the Hart Memorial Trophy (league MVP) 9 times, and other league awards multiple times. He played in the NHL's All-Star Game every year he was in the league and was the first player to be named game MVP with three different teams. These are records that people believe will never be broken. As soon as he retired, Gretzky was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Gretzky's involvement with hockey did not end when he retired as a player. Since he stopped playing, he has taken on different management roles in the hockey world. He has been the general manager of Canada's international hockey team, Team Canada. In 2002, under Gretzky's management, Team Canada won the Olympic gold medal over the USA, thus ending a 50-year Olympic drought for Canada's men's hockey teams. As a manager, Gretzky has presided over a renaissance of Canadian men's hockey on the international scene. In 2004, Canada held all current international titles---the Olympics, the World Cup and the World Championship. Gretzky has also managed and become a part owner of an NHL hockey team. He has continued to inspire people everywhere, not only for his hockey magic, but also for his sportsmanship and kindness. Wayne Gretzky has become a Canadian legend.

Underline the PRESENT PERFECT in the text. Why is this verb tense used in each case?

Write a sentence with each of the following words and expressions.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | UNSURPASSED | _____ |
| 2. | A DECADE | _____ |
| 3. | TO SET A RECORD | _____ |
| 4. | A HOCKEY
LEAGUE | _____ |
| 5. | TOURNAMENT | _____ |
| 6. | LEGENDARY | _____ |
| 7. | A ROOKIE | _____ |
| 8. | A STANDING
OVATION | _____ |
| 9. | FANS | _____ |
| 10. | TO CRUSH | _____ |
| 11. | OPPONENT | _____ |
| 12. | TO RETIRE | _____ |
| 13. | RETIREMENT | _____ |
| 14. | UNPARALLELED | _____ |
| 15. | TO BE INDUCTED
INTO | _____ |
| 16. | DROUGHT | _____ |
| 17. | SPORTSMANSHIP | _____ |

Answer the following questions.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | Where did Gretzky practice hockey as a child? | _____ |
| | | _____ |
| 2. | Why was he called the “White Tornado”? | _____ |
| | | _____ |

Intermediate 1 – Reading Exercise 4 – Present Perfect: Wayne Gretzky

3. What happened when Gretzky represented Canada for the first time? _____

4. Why did fans like Gretzky? _____

5. What are some of the records that Gretzky broke? _____

6. What are some of the awards that Gretzky won? _____

7. What happened with Gretzky's Number 99 when he retired? _____

8. What has Gretzky done since retiring? _____

9. Why has Gretzky become a Canadian legend? _____

10. Why is Gretzky considered a Canadian legend? _____
