

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Obituary: Michael Jackson

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4612963.stm>

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**Michael Jackson's unique blend of soul, funk and rock made him the biggest pop act in the world.**



Jackson's first break came in 1968, when the Jackson Five signed to the Motown label, and the group released its first single.

In 1970 the Jackson Five became the first group to have their first four singles top the charts. A series of solo hits, including *Ben* - the maudlin, yet chart-topping, paean to a rat, fulfilled the promise of those early years.

By the mid-1970s, both Michael's, and his brothers, careers were beginning to stall.

## Video extravaganza

*Off The Wall*, released in 1979, provided four top ten US hits.

In 1983 *Thriller*, would become the best-selling album of all time. The film accompanying the album's title track was a 16-minute extravaganza, featuring cutting-edge special effects and the voice of Vincent Price, made the mini-musical blockbuster de rigueur for pop stars.

## Stripped-down sound

The Jackson phenomenon showed no sign of slowing down when, in 1987, he released *Bad*. With five number one hits, the album also featured a 17-minute video and a year-long world tour. *Dangerous*, Jackson's 1991 outing, featured a more stripped-down sound than its predecessors. The magic remained, despite the tabloid headlines and court cases which threatened to damage the singer's reputation.

## Controversy

But his 1995 album, a compilation of old hits and new material entitled *HISTory*, failed to ignite the popular imagination and only enjoyed a brief \_\_\_\_\_ in the charts. Whether this was due to the star's increasingly erratic behaviour, continuing speculation about his private life or just the public turning increasingly to rap and hip-hop, is a matter for debate. His appearance at the 1996 Brit Awards ceremony in London, surrounded by children, proved too much for some, notably Jarvis Cocker, who showed his displeasure by storming the stage and \_\_\_\_\_ the performance.

Michael Jackson's final album, *Invincible* (2001) was released when he looked anything but. Rumours that his record company, Sony, had asked for \$200m back effectively drowned out the music. It seemed an underwhelming end to what had been one of the most spectacular of all musical careers.

Arrested in 2003 on charges of molesting a 14-year-old boy, he was cleared in June 2005 after a five-month trial.

As rumours of bankruptcy circled, Jackson moved to the Middle East befriending Sheikh Abdulla Al-Khalifa who later sued Jackson for \$7m, saying the star had reneged on a contract that would have repaid loans. The pair settled out of court last year.

Jackson was due to begin a series of sold-out comeback concerts which Jackson had billed his "final curtain call". Rehearsals were under way when the star suffered a cardiac arrest at his home in Bel Air. He was pronounced dead at the UCLA medical centre in Los Angeles.

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## Questions

- 1) What is the main purpose of this text?
  - a) to advertise Michael Jackson's tour
  - b) to inform you about the life of a pop star
  - c) to persuade you to watch the 'Thriller' video
  - d) to give details of album sales
  
- 2) Look up the following words, write their definition then use them in a sentence to show meaning:

paean      maudlin      extravaganza      compilation
  
- 3) What do you understand by the word 'underwhelming'. What impression does it give?
  
- 4) Give an alternative phrase for 'final curtain call'.
  
- 5) Which word could best be used to replace 'de rigueur'?
  - a) pointless
  - b) essential
  - c) unnecessary
  - d) popular
  
- 6) Find 3 examples where commas are used to add extra information.
  
- 7) Which of these is the correct spelling for the first missing word?
  - a) appearence
  - b) apearance
  - c) appearance
  - d) appeerance
  
- 8) Re-write the first three paragraphs replacing the missing apostrophes.
  
- 9) Which of these is the correct spelling for the second missing word in the text?
  - a) interrupting
  - b) interupting
  - c) interepting
  - d) intrupting
  
- 10) Write a brief summary of this article. (50 - 100 words). Proof read your work and correct any errors.