Name: _____ Date: _____

Worth Three Points

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 843 words

On March 13, 2025, Stephen Curry got the ball near the right side of the court. He stepped to the side. Then he shot from about 27 feet away. That is nearly three times as high as a hoop. The ball went in. It was his 4,000th three in the NBA, and no one had made that many.

Curry plays basketball for the Golden State Warriors. A three-point shot is taken from behind a curved line. It counts three points, not two. Through early November 2026, he has made more of them than anyone in NBA history. This book is about that line, and about the man who shoots from behind it.

Look at a basketball court, and you will find the line. It runs straight along each side. Then it swings out in a big curve around the basket. At the top of the curve, it is 23 feet 9 inches from the middle of the basket. That is more than twice as far as the hoop is high.

In the corners, the line is closer. There the curve stops, and the line runs straight to the end of the court. It sits three feet in from the sideline. A shot from the corner is only 22 feet away, the shortest three-point shot on the floor.

Here is how the line counts. A shot made from inside the line, or from on it, is worth two points. A shot made from outside the line is worth three. The shooter needs a foot outside the line. He cannot touch the line or the floor inside it as he shoots, so a toe on the line makes it a two.

Why is a far shot worth more? It is harder to make. The NBA added it to reward long shots. In 2025-26, NBA players made about 36 of every 100 tries from outside the line. From inside it, they made about 55 of every 100. By our math, 100 tries from outside bring about 108 points. And 100 tries from inside bring about 110. That is close to even.

The three-point shot is not very old. Pro leagues tried it in the 1960s. The NBA added the line for the 1979-80 season. Many people thought it was only a gimmick. On October 12, 1979, a Boston Celtics guard named Chris Ford is credited with the first one. That season, a team tried fewer than three a game.

Stephen Curry was born on March 14, 1988, in Akron, Ohio. He went to high school in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was thin, about 160 pounds, and few big colleges chased him. Davidson College began to recruit him hard in tenth grade. He chose to go there.

In March 2008, Davidson was a No. 10 seed in the NCAA tournament. In the first game, Curry scored 40 points, and Davidson beat Gonzaga. Then it beat Georgetown. Then it beat a No. 3 seed. In the Elite Eight, Davidson played top seed Kansas. Kansas double-teamed Curry on the last play. He passed to a teammate. The last shot missed, and Davidson lost, 59 to 57.

The next year, Curry led the whole country in scoring. In June 2009, the Golden State Warriors picked him seventh in the NBA draft. The draft is how new players join the league. Teams take turns choosing the players they want. Curry was one of the first seven picked.

In the NBA, his shot soon began setting records. In 2012-13, Curry made 272 threes in a single season, and no one had ever made more than that. The old record was 269, set by Ray Allen in 2005-06. Three seasons later, in 2015-16, he broke his own record.

In 2015-16, Curry made 402 threes. That is about five every game. Through early November 2026, no one has made more in a season. That year, all 131 voters put him first for Most Valuable Player. No player had ever won the award by a vote that was unanimous.

On December 14, 2021, Curry played at Madison Square Garden in New York. In the first quarter, he made his second three of the game. It gave him more threes than any player had ever made in a career. The old record belonged to Ray Allen. Allen needed 1,300 games to get there. Curry needed 789.

Curry has won four NBA titles, the last in 2022, when he was also the Finals MVP. Through early November 2026, he is 38 years old and still with the Warriors. He has made 4,275 threes in regular-season games. Each one was shot from behind a line on the floor, and each one counted three.

How does a shooter keep it up? In the summer of 2021, Curry trained with his trainer, Brandon Payne. They worked about five days a week. A shot counted only if the ball dropped through the middle of the hoop. One day, after a few misses, Payne told him to finish his shot strong. Curry then made 20 in a row. That ended the workout.

Questions

1. How far is the NBA three-point line from the middle of the basket at the top of the curve?

A. 22 feet
B. 23 feet 9 inches
C. 30 feet

2. Why is a three-point shot worth more than a two-point shot?

A. It is harder to make
B. It uses a bigger ball
C. It takes longer to shoot

3. In "many people thought it was only a gimmick," what does gimmick mean?

A. A rule
B. A prize
C. A cheap trick

4. What happened on Davidson's last play against Kansas in 2008?

A. Curry took the shot and made it

B. Curry was double-teamed and a teammate took the shot

C. Curry fouled out

5. Whose career record did Curry pass on December 14, 2021?

A. Ray Allen's

B. Chris Ford's

C. Michael Jordan's

6. What did Curry do after Payne told him to finish his shot strong?

A. He took a long break

B. He missed ten more

C. He made 20 shots in a row

Words to know

gimmick: cheap trick

tournament: knockout contest

draft: choosing players

unanimous: all agreeing

corner: where sides meet

Answer key: Worth Three Points

1. B. 23 feet 9 inches
2. A. It is harder to make
3. C. A cheap trick
4. B. Curry was double-teamed and a teammate took the shot
5. A. Ray Allen's
6. C. He made 20 shots in a row