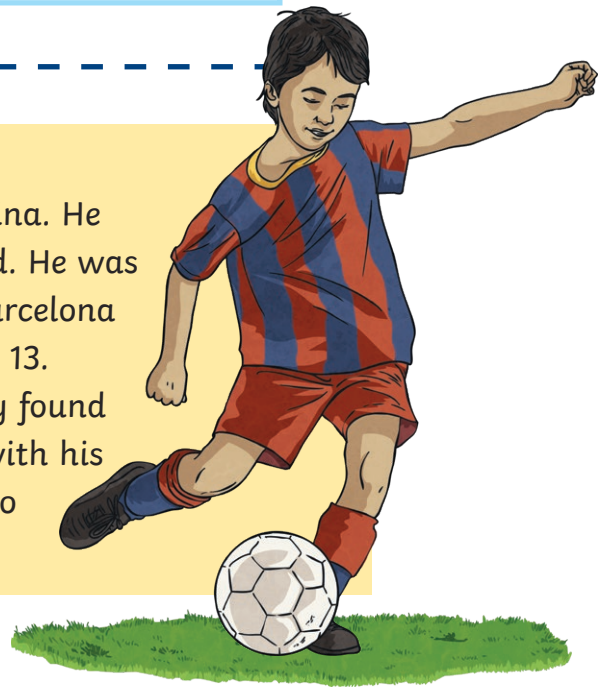


# Lionel Messi

Lionel Messi is a professional footballer from Argentina.

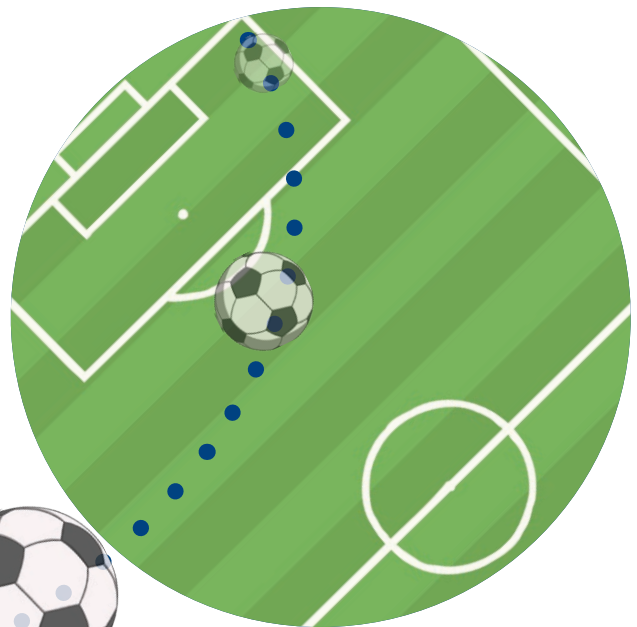
## Childhood

Lionel was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987 in Argentina. He started playing football when he was a child. He was a talented young player and he moved to Barcelona to train with their youth team when he was 13. Lionel settled quickly in Spain but his family found it harder to adapt. He stayed in Barcelona with his father while the rest of his family returned to Argentina.



## Sporting Career

Lionel played his first game for FC Barcelona when he was 16. He made history as the youngest player and goalscorer in the highest division of football in Spain. Lionel was shorter than most of the other players at 5 feet 7 inches but he didn't let that overcome him. He gained many fans with his pace and football skills.



## Did You Know...?

Barcelona won three European championship titles during the football season of 2008-2009 and again in 2014-2015.

Lionel continued to play for Argentina in national games. They achieved the gold medal in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. They also won a tournament which was played with other countries from South America in 2021.

Lionel left Barcelona after an amazing 21 years there and moved to a French football club called Paris Saint-Germain. He left as the leading goalscorer in the league's history with an impressive 474 goals. He also broke records as being one of the highest-paid footballers in the world.

The Ballon d'Or is an award which is given to a professional player who is thought to have played the best football in the world that year. Lionel has achieved this award seven times.



## Charity Work

Lionel has been involved with a number of charities. He set up his own organisation in order to help children who need special care or are at risk. Lionel also represents a charity called UNICEF which helps children across the world. Lionel donated a large amount of money to hospitals in Argentina and Spain so that they could help treat coronavirus patients in 2020.

# Questions

1. Who did Lionel stay in Barcelona with? Tick one.

- father
- mother
- sister
- brother

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Lionel achieved European championship titles with Barcelona.
- Lionel was born in 1987.
- Lionel trained with Barcelona's youth team.
- Lionel left Barcelona as the league's highest goal scorer.

3. Where were the hospitals that Lionel donated money to in 2020? Tick **two**.

- France
- Argentina
- United Kingdom
- Spain

4. Draw **four** lines and complete the sentences.

Lionel settled quickly in Spain...

during the football season of 2008-2009 and again in 2014-2015.

Barcelona won three European championship titles...

with an impressive 474 goals.

They achieved the gold medal...

but his family found it harder to adapt.

He left as the leading goal scorer in the league's history...

in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

5. Look at the first paragraph in the section **Sporting Career**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'speed'.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Fill in the missing word.

Lionel has been \_\_\_\_\_ with a number of charities.

7. Why do you think Lionel stayed at Barcelona for so many years instead of moving to another football club?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

1. Who did Lionel stay in Barcelona with? Tick one.

- father**  
 mother  
 sister  
 brother

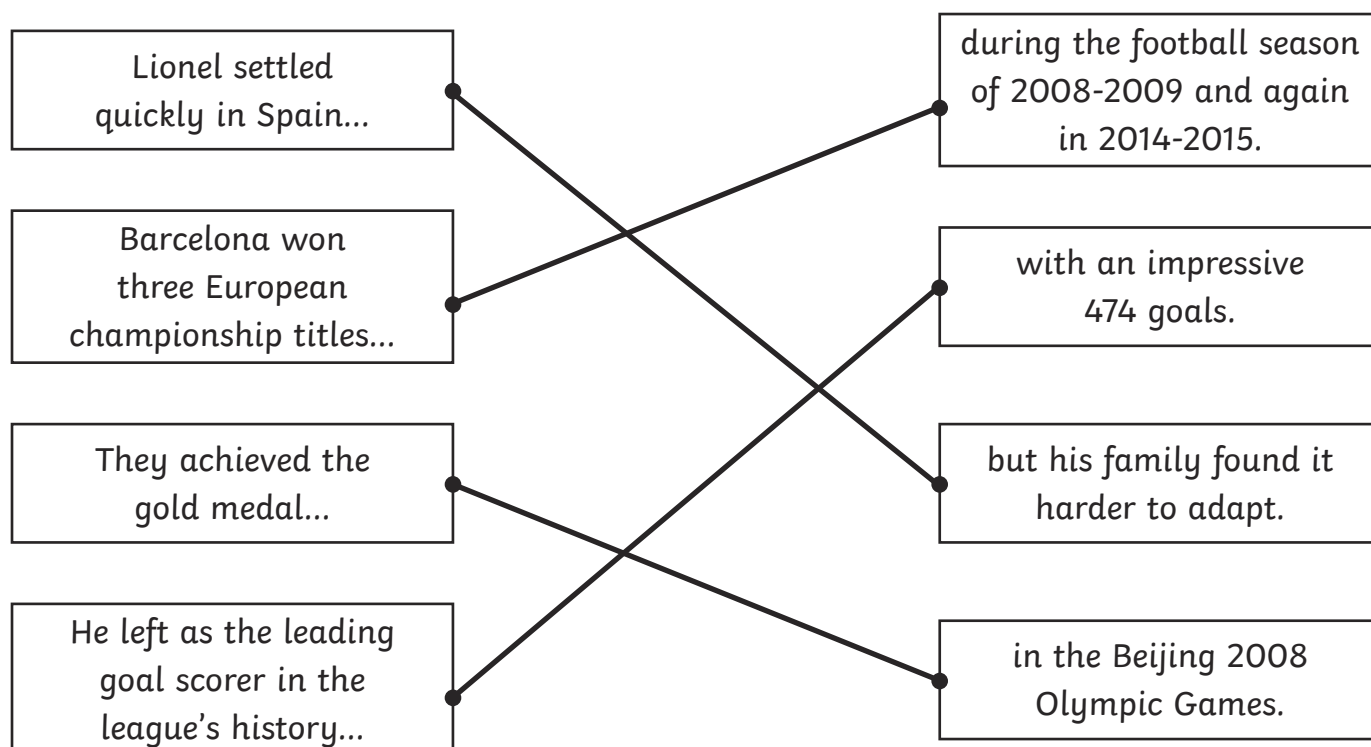
2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 3** Lionel achieved European championship titles with Barcelona.  
**1** Lionel was born in 1987.  
**2** Lionel trained with Barcelona's youth team.  
**4** Lionel left Barcelona as the league's highest goal scorer.

3. Where were the hospitals that Lionel donated money to in 2020? Tick **two**.

- France  
 **Argentina**  
 United Kingdom  
 **Spain**

4. Draw four lines and complete the sentences.



5. Look at the first paragraph in the section **Sporting Career**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'speed'.

**pace**

6. Fill in the missing word.

Lionel has been **involved** with a number of charities.

7. Why do you think Lionel stayed at Barcelona for so many years instead of moving to another football club?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Lionel stayed at Barcelona for so many years because he was very successful there. I also think that he was very connected to the club because he started there so young.**

# Lionel Messi

Lionel Messi is a professional footballer from Argentina. He is a respected sports person and works with charities that support children around the world.

## Childhood

Lionel was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987 in Argentina. He started playing football when he was a child. He was a talented young player and at the age of 13, Lionel moved to Barcelona to train with their youth team. Although Lionel settled in quickly in Spain, it was harder for his family to adapt. While his mother and **siblings** moved back to Argentina, Lionel and his father stayed in Barcelona.



## Sporting Career

At the age of 16, Lionel played his first game for FC Barcelona. In the 2004-2005 season, he made history as the youngest player and goalscorer in the highest division of football in Spain. Although Lionel was shorter than most of the other players at 5 feet 7 inches, he didn't let that overcome him. He gained many fans with his pace and football skills.

An important time during Lionel's career was between 2008-2009. During this football season, Barcelona achieved three major European championship titles. This treble championship win was also repeated during the 2014-2015 season. Lionel played for Barcelona for an incredible 21 years.

Alongside playing for Barcelona, Lionel continued to represent Argentina in national competitions. Amazingly, they achieved the gold medal in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Additionally, Lionel represented Argentina in a tournament which is played among national teams from South America. They won this tournament in 2011 and Lionel was the captain.

In August 2021, Lionel left Barcelona and moved to a French football club called Paris Saint-Germain. Lionel left Barcelona as the leading goalscorer in the league's history with an impressive 474 goals. He also broke records as being one of the highest-paid footballers in the world.

Each year, an award called the Ballon d'Or is given to a professional player who is thought to have played the best football in the world. Lionel has achieved this award seven times.



### Charity Work

Throughout his career, Lionel has been involved with a number of charities. He founded his own organisation in 2007 in order to help **vulnerable** children. In 2010, Lionel began to represent a children's charity called UNICEF and he travelled to Haiti to raise awareness of people suffering there after an earthquake. In 2020, Lionel donated a large amount of money to Argentinian and Spanish hospitals so that they could help treat coronavirus patients.

### Glossary

**siblings:** Brothers and sisters.

**vulnerable:** Someone who needs special care or is at risk.

# Questions

1. Which city was the Olympics in when Messi won a gold medal with Argentina? Tick one.

- Barcelona
- Beijing
- Paris
- Tokyo

2. Draw **four** lines and complete the sentences.

He is a respected  
sportsperson...

when he was a child.

He started  
playing football...

Lionel continued to  
represent Argentina in  
national competitions.

Alongside playing for  
Barcelona,...

who is thought to have  
played the best football in  
the world.

Each year, an award  
called the Ballon  
d'Or is given to a  
professional player...

and works with charities  
that support children  
around the world.

3. He gained many fans with his **pace** and football skills. Which word has the closest meaning to the word **pace**? Tick one.

- speed
- personality
- tricks
- goals

4. When did Lionel win a tournament with Argentina that was played against other South American countries? Tick one.
- 2005
- 2008
- 2014
- 2021
5. Look at the section **Childhood**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'adjust' or 'change'.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Fill in the missing word.

Barcelona achieved three major European \_\_\_\_\_ titles.

7. Why do you think Lionel continued to stay in Barcelona when most of his family moved back to Argentina?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. **Although Lionel was shorter than most of the other players at 5 feet 7 inches, he didn't let that overcome him.** What does the phrase 'he didn't let that overcome him' show us about Lionel's personality? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

1. Which city was the Olympics in when Messi won a gold medal with Argentina? Tick one.

- Barcelona
- Beijing**
- Paris
- Tokyo

2. Draw **four** lines and complete the sentences.

He is a respected sportsperson...	when he was a child.
He started playing football...	Lionel continued to represent Argentina in national competitions.
Alongside playing for Barcelona,...	who is thought to have played the best football in the world.
Each year, an award called the Ballon d'Or is given to a professional player...	and works with charities that support children around the world.

3. He gained many fans with his **pace** and football skills. Which word has the closest meaning to the word **pace**? Tick one.

- speed**
- personality
- tricks
- goals

4. When did Lionel win a tournament with Argentina that was played against other South American countries? Tick one.
- 2005
  - 2008
  - 2014
  - 2021**
5. Look at the section **Childhood**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'adjust' or 'change'.

**adapt**

6. Fill in the missing word.
- Barcelona achieved three major European **championship** titles.
7. Why do you think Lionel continued to stay in Barcelona when most of his family moved back to Argentina?
- Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Lionel continued to stay in Barcelona when most of his family moved back to Argentina because he was following his dream of becoming a professional football player. Although he would have missed his family, he was given a great opportunity in Spain.**
8. **Although Lionel was shorter than most of the other players at 5 feet 7 inches, he didn't let that overcome him.** What does the phrase 'he didn't let that overcome him' show us about Lionel's personality?
- Pupils' own responses, such as: The phrase 'he didn't let that overcome him' shows us that Lionel was very determined. He knew that he was a talented footballer and he believed in his ability.**

# Lionel Messi

Lionel Messi is a professional footballer from Argentina. As well as being a celebrated sportsman, Lionel is involved with charities in order to support children around the world.

## Childhood

Lionel was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987 in Argentina. He started playing football when he was a child and in 1995, he joined the youth team in Rosario. His talent attracted the attention of European clubs abroad and at the age of 13, Lionel moved to Barcelona to train with their youth team. Although Lionel settled in quickly in Spain, it was much harder for his family to adapt. His mother and siblings moved back to Argentina while Lionel and his father stayed in Barcelona.



## Sporting Career

At the age of 16, Lionel played his first game for FC Barcelona. In the 2004-2005 season, he made history as the youngest player and goalscorer in the highest division of football in Spain. Although Lionel was shorter than most of the other professional players at 5 feet 7 inches, he didn't let that overcome him and he gained many fans with his pace and football skills.

Lionel has had many achievements as a professional footballer. An important time in his career was 2008-2009. During this football season, Barcelona achieved three major European championship titles. This treble championship win was also repeated during the 2014-2015 season. Lionel played for Barcelona for a staggering 21 years.

Alongside playing for Barcelona, Lionel continued to represent Argentina in national competitions. Amazingly, they achieved the gold medal in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Additionally, Lionel represented Argentina in a tournament which is played among national teams from South America. The most successful of these tournaments was in 2021 where Lionel led his team to victory as captain against Brazil.

In August 2021, Lionel left Barcelona and moved to another European football club. He signed a contract with Paris Saint-Germain and

**relocated** to France with his wife and three sons. Lionel left Barcelona as the leading goalscorer in the league's history with an impressive 474 goals. Lionel also broke records as being one of the highest-paid footballers in the world.

Each year, an award called the Ballon d'Or is given to a professional player who is thought to have played the best football in the world. Lionel has achieved this award an outstanding seven times.



## Glossary

**ambassador:** Someone who represents or advertises an organisation.

**relocated:** To move home to a new place.

**vulnerable:** Someone who needs special care or is at risk.



## Charity Work

Throughout his career, Lionel has been involved with a number of charities. He founded his own organisation in 2007 in order to help **vulnerable** children. In March 2010, Lionel was made an **ambassador** for a children's charity called UNICEF. He travelled to Haiti to raise awareness of young people who were suffering there after a destructive earthquake. In 2020, Lionel donated a large amount of money to Argentinian and Spanish hospitals so that they could help treat coronavirus patients.

# Questions

1. Look at the last paragraph of **Sporting Career**. Which word shows that the author is impressed with Lionel's achievements? Tick one.

- award
- professional
- achieved
- outstanding

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Argentina achieved a gold medal in the Beijing Olympic Games.
- Lionel was born in Argentina.
- Lionel became the youngest player in the highest division of football in Spain.
- Lionel relocated to France.

3. Which youth team did Lionel join in 1995?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the missing word.

Lionel Messi is a \_\_\_\_\_ footballer from Argentina.

5. Look at the section **Charity Work**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'damaging' or 'disastrous'.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **Lionel played for Barcelona for a staggering 21 years.** Why do you think the author decided to include the word **staggering**?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Summarise what you have learnt about Lionel Messi in 30 words or fewer.

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8. What qualities do you think Lionel needed to have to be captain of Argentina?

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# Answers

1. Look at the last paragraph of **Sporting Career**. Which word shows that the author is impressed with Lionel's achievements? Tick one.

- award
- professional
- achieved
- outstanding**

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

**3** Argentina achieved a gold medal in the Beijing Olympic Games.

**1** Lionel was born in Argentina.

**2** Lionel became the youngest player in the highest division of football in Spain.

**4** Lionel relocated to France.

3. Which youth team did Lionel join in 1995?

**Lionel joined the youth team in Rosario in 1995.**

4. Fill in the missing word.

Lionel Messi is a **professional** footballer from Argentina.

5. Look at the section **Charity Work**. Find and copy one word which means the same as 'damaging' or 'disastrous'.

**destructive**

6. **Lionel played for Barcelona for a staggering 21 years.** Why do you think the author decided to include the word **staggering**?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author decided to include the word 'staggering' because it is an impressive length of time. It is also quite unusual for a footballer to remain at the same club for that long.**

7. Summarise what you have learnt about Lionel Messi in 30 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Lionel Messi is a successful footballer who has played for Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain and Argentina. He is very talented. He also works with charities to support vulnerable children.**

8. What qualities do you think Lionel needed to have to be captain of Argentina?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Lionel needed to be brave and confident to be captain of Argentina. He also needed to be enthusiastic to motivate his team.**