

**Evolution of Celebrities & Icons**

- I. **DEFINE: "Celebrity" (in your own words)**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. When did celebrity/hero obsession begin?
  - a. People have always been intrigued by celebrities. **What types of people were famous thousands of years ago?**
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Early celebrities: Olympians
    - i. **How did Olympians get the red-carpet treatment? (1 example)**
  
  
  
  
  
  
    - c. Gladiators were also famous in the Roman era. **How were they idolized?**
  
  
  
  
  
    - d. **In the centuries that followed, what other types of people else gained celebrity? (LIST)**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
    - e. What did celebrity look like in 18<sup>th</sup> century America?
      - i. **Early Americans were most intrigued by what kind of people?**
  
  
  
  
  
      - ii. **What values were most celebrated in these 18<sup>th</sup> century American celebrities?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
      - f. How did celebrity change in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
        - i. Celebrity included well-known people in society who were glamorous or fashionable. The MEDIA began making celebrities rather than celebrities using the media to reach the public.
        - ii. As literacy rates continued to improve, more people amused themselves with reading newspaper and magazine stories about these new celebrities.
        - iii. 19<sup>th</sup> c. celebrities

1. What did Sam Patch, “The New Jersey Jumper,” become famous for?

a. How did his death raise questions about media pressure and the dangers associated with it?

2. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, looking to fill the pages of daily newspapers, reporting focused more and more on the careers and personal lives of stars and stories of notorious criminals.

a. Lots of interesting folks to report on (FOR EX – LIST 2)

g. Tabloid newspapers:

1. By WWI (1910s), improvements in print technology led to a rise in tabloid news.

2. Hollywood film studios also began cashing in on Americans’ growing fascination with stars by publishing stories about their leading actors.

a. Movie fan magazines – magazines published interviews with the stars and gossip columns focused on the personal lives and careers of the stars.

h. Walter Winchell: gossip columnist of the 1920s, had a huge reach (thanks to newspapers & radio), helped to foster a greater interest in the private lives of the stars

i. The dawn of modern media (late 19th-20th century):

i. How did the invention of the radio, tv and eventually the internet change celebrity? (EXPLAIN & give 2 examples)

ii. Changes in celebrity coverage (1960s-present):

1. By the 1960s, who owned fan magazines AND how did that change the type of coverage of celebrities?

- iii. Rise of the paparazzi in the 1980s & 1990s – helped boost stars’ profiles but could also ruin their reputation.
- iv. Increase in stories and info about stars’ lives increased people’s desire for celebrity gossip.
- v. Celebrities take control of the narrative (1990s-present):
  - 1. **How have celebrities used technology/social media to their advantage?**

## Celebrities, Heroes & Icons

### I. Celebrities, Heroes & Icons - what's the difference?

- a. **Icon:** a person or object which/who is important as a symbol of certain beliefs or concepts which personify types of behavior, lifestyles, or identities.
  - i. MEANING WHAT?
  
- b. How can a person be an American icon? (Pick ONE of the images and answer the questions below.)
  - i. What makes the person iconic?
  
  - ii. What does the person symbolize for Americans? How do they speak to American values or beliefs?
  
- c. How can an inanimate object be an American icon? (Pick ONE of the images and answer the questions below.)
  - i. What makes the object iconic? (Refer to the definition above if you need a refresher.)
  
  - ii. What does the object symbolize for Americans? How does the object speak to American values or beliefs?

II. **Hero** (DEFINE)

- a. Our heroes have changed over time from heroic leaders to celebrities made famous through social media and tv..

III. **Heroes of deed**

- i. DEFINE:

- b. Examples:

- c. Many say that heroes of deed are a dying breed.

*Today, we much more often celebrate people whose fame is generated by the media.*

IV. **Celebrities (media created figures):**

- a. People who often have exceptional talent but that's not always what they're best known for.
- b. Their fame represents whatever values and qualities are the fad in the nation at the time.
- c. Their celebrity status is sometimes short-lived, lasting only as long as the nation's interest lasts.
- d. Examples:

- V. Many celebrities choose to use their platform exclusively to benefit themselves. However, some choose to use their platform for more than advancing their career. In this case, it is possible for a person to be BOTH a celebrity AND an icon/hero.

- a. For example?

# Muhammad Ali

## I. Early Years

A. Cassius Clay (Ali) won the light heavyweight gold medal at the 1960 summer Olympics in Rome at the age of 18. **Why did he throw his medal in the Ohio River after returning home to Louisville?**

B. Clay turned pro. From 1960-1963, he won all 19 fights he entered.

## II. The “Louisville Lip”

A. Clay became known for being a non-stop talker, a self-promoter, and a boxing poet.

**1. Give ONE example:**

## III. First Professional Fight (Feb. 1964)

A. Ali’s first professional title fight was against Sonny Liston, the reigning heavyweight champ. The odds were stacked 7-1 against Clay yet the Louisville Lip was confident.

**1. Give ONE example of his pre-fight self-promotion:**

IV. Ali defended his heavyweight title in 9 bouts from 1965-1967, including in a rematch with Liston in 1965.

## V. Ali and the Nation of Islam

A. Ali became an outspoken member of the Nation of Islam, a black separatist movement that practiced the religion of Islam.

**B. How is what the Nation of Islam believed DIFFERENT FROM the kind of civil rights Martin Luther King was calling for in the ‘60s?**

**C. Why do you think that might have scared/angered some of Ali’s fans?**

**D. In 1964, Cassius Clay changed his name Muhammad Ali. Why?**

VI. Ali and the Vietnam War

A. By the mid-1960s, the country was split over the Vietnam War. In 1967, Ali was called up to serve in Vietnam.

B. Muhammad Ali - Lords of the Revolution documentary

**1. How did Ali respond to the news that he had been classified as registrant 1A and was being drafted?**

**2. What reason did Ali give the draft board in 1966 for his unwillingness to serve in Vietnam?**

**3. What consequences did Ali experience when he refused induction in April 1967?**

**4. How did Ali's speaking circuit at the nation's college campuses help to change his public image?** Consider who embraced his message and how that fit in with the changing public opinion of the war in Vietnam.

- VII. Ali's protest in historical context: Race, power and protest
- A. America's racial politics changed a lot from 1964-1968. Some Americans were becoming more militant and more focused on Black Power.
    - 1. **How is what Ali says in the video clip tied to the way many black Americans felt at the time?**
- VIII. Ali v. Frazier (1970) - the "Fight of the Century"
- A. Ali was allowed to return to the ring in 1970. In his third fight back in the ring, he fought Joe Frazier in Madison Square Garden.
    - 1. **Why was the fight significant?**
- IX. Ali v. Foreman (1975) - the "Rumble in the Jungle"
- A. CONSIDER: **Why was this fight billed as a triumph of Black Power?**
- X. FYI: In 1971, the Supreme Court granted Ali conscientious objector status, reversing Ali's prior conviction.



### **M. ALI REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. If you were to explain to someone what made Muhammad Ali important as an athlete, what would you say? (Be sure to give 2-3 specific details from the slides/videos in your explanation.)
2. In the last class we talked about what makes someone an icon (they symbolize certain beliefs or values.) What did Muhammad Ali symbolize for people? Why might we say that he was a sports icon?

## Cultural Heroes & Icons Project

Keeping in mind the definitions of a celebrity, hero & cultural icon that we discussed in class, **research** your assigned icon/hero & **make a Google slideshow** about them to teach the class. ***You will present your finished project to your table group only.***

<p>Iconic.</p> <p><i>"A person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration."</i></p> <p><i>"very famous or popular, especially being considered to represent particular opinions or a particular time"</i></p>	<p><b>Hero</b></p> <p>[he-ro] noun</p> <p>Someone admired for their courage, achievements, noble sacrifices, &amp; ability to stare adversity in the face without a single blink.</p>
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**First, RESEARCH your figure. Your NOTES should answer the questions below (10 pts):**

1. **Biography:** Who are they? Why were they famous? (Give some detail on their career, fame, etc.)
2. **Achievements:** What were their achievements? (records set, awards won, accomplishments, etc.)  
What contribution did they make to the larger social, political, historical or cultural environment?
3. **Explanation of meaning/significance** Why are they a hero/icon in their time and beyond?
  - a. Were they important as an icon (what did they symbolize?) and/or was it because they did something great (hero)?
  - b. Consider how events/conditions in their time may have made their accomplishments possible or all the more important/note-worthy. (Historical context/significance)
4. **Legacy:** What was their legacy or lasting impact?

**Then, using your notes, please create a short SLIDESHOW (5-8 slides) that highlights (30 pts):**

- A brief biography
- Achievements
- Explanation of the person's meaning in the decade in which they were most influential (Why are they considered an icon or hero? What values or beliefs do they speak to?)
- Details on their legacy

**Reminders:**

- **You do need a bibliography so make sure to keep track of your text sources when you are researching!** Make an additional slide after your content with your source citations.
- Make sure to include *at least* one image per slide
- Bullet text wherever you can (vs. blocks of paragraph text)
- Font should be *at least* 18 pt or larger. Also remember that light colors, fancy fonts and text laid over images are hard to read when projected.

**Sources:** You must use at least 3 credible sources (NOT Wikipedia!). Good resources to consider: sites like History.com, PBS.com, or LS library databases (Biography in Context, Pop Culture Universe, U.S. History in Context.)

## Heroes/Icons

- Charlie Chaplin (actor/comedian)
- Jackie Robinson (baseball)
- Jack Dempsey (boxer)
- Shirley Temple (child film star)
- Jackie Kennedy (1st lady)
- John Wayne (film)
- John Dillinger (criminal)
- Bob Ross (painter)
- Dolly Parton (singer)
- Bob Dylan (folk singer)
- Elizabeth Taylor (actress)
- Freddie Mercury (singer)
- Norman Rockwell (artist)
- Stan Lee (comics)
- Coco Chanel (fashion designer)
- Richard Simmons (fitness personality)
- Julia Child (chef)
- Lucille Ball (actress)
- Larry Bird (basketball player)
- Michael Jackson (singer)
- Katharine Hepburn (actress)
- Billie Holiday (singer)
- Michael Jordan (basketball player)
- Walt Disney (animator/businessman)
- Audrey Hepburn (actress)
- Andy Warhol (artist)
- Hugh Hefner (Playboy)
- Madonna (singer)
- Boy George (singer)
- Frank Sinatra (singer)
- Prince (singer)
- Amelia Earhart (pilot)
- Henry Ford (Ford Motor Co.)
- Jimi Hendrix (guitarist, singer)
- Marilyn Monroe (actress)
- Spike Lee (filmmaker)
- Selena (singer)
- Steve Jobs (inventor/businessman)
- Aretha Franklin (singer)
- Carol Burnett (actress)
- Barbie (toy)
- Marlboro Man (cigarette advertisement)
- Rita Moreno (actress, singer, dancer)