



Intro to Celebrity

Celebrities & American Culture



Do you follow any celebrities on social media or in some other format?

If yes, what kinds of people & why?

If no, why not?



Americans are
celebrity
obsessed.



Do you think that the NEWS devotes too much attention to celebrities?
Why/why not?

Think about what news
YOU choose to
consume.

How often do you
read/watch the “real
news”?

Are you more likely to
read/listen to a story
about a celebrity?





vevo

SLANG DICTIONARY

stan

[stan]

WHAT DOES STAN MEAN?

Stan is slang for someone who is a very zealous fan, especially of a celebrity or music group. *Stan* can also be a verb for liking something a great deal.





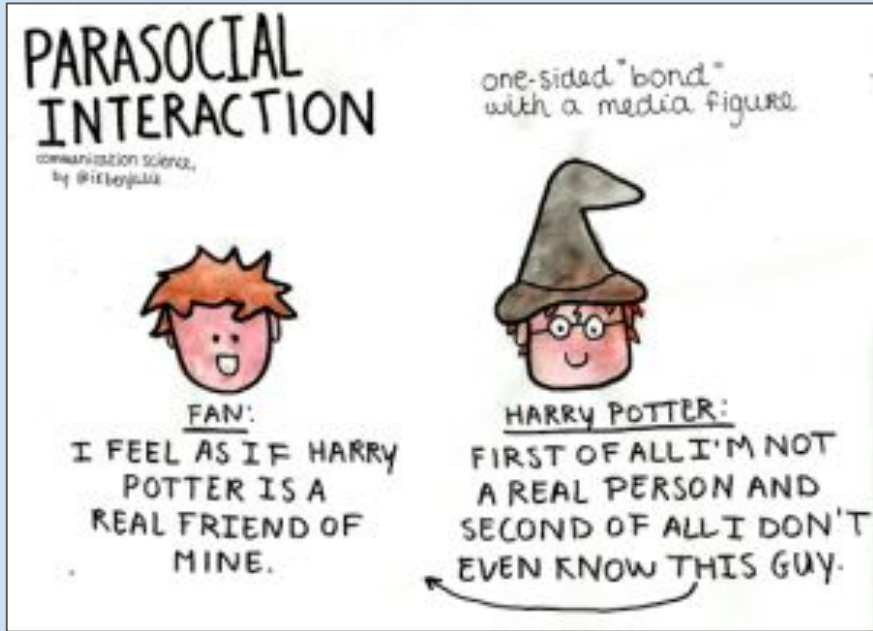
Fans/stans are a natural outgrowth of the 24-7 access we have to celebrities.

Parasocial relationship: An ongoing, one-sided bond with a media figure

- ★ Example: If you adore an actor, singer, influencer, gamer, etc. and often think about and discuss the person as if they were one of your friends, then you have a parasocial relationship with that person.

Parasocial interaction: An imagined interaction with a media figure during a discrete viewing situation

- ★ Example: If you feel like you're hanging out with your favorite YouTuber when watching them live stream themselves applying makeup, playing a video game, eating a meal, etc., you're engaging in a parasocial interaction.



Why does this happen?

- When we spend a lot of time with someone, it's natural to feel closer & more committed to them/the friendship.
- Humans are wired to make social connections.
 - When we are presented with a person or person-like individual via video or audio media, our brains respond as if they were engaging in a real-life social situation. Despite the fact that we *know* that the interaction is an illusion, our perception will cause us to react to the situation as if it were real.
- Social media has introduced a new way to develop, maintain, & strengthen our parasocial relationships.



Parasocial Relationships



Podcast hosts



Fictional characters



Musicians/singers



My brain:

Friend?



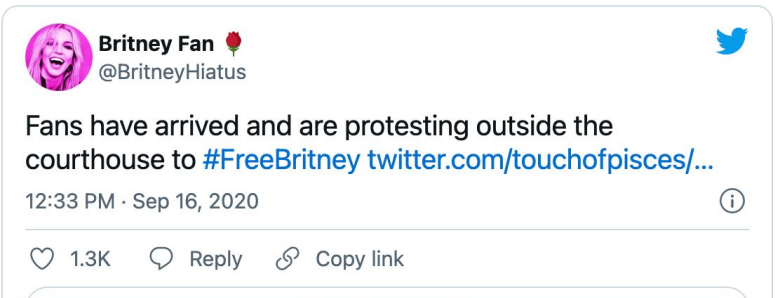


Do YOU have any
parasocial
relationships with
famous people?

EXAMPLE: Britney Spears



- In 2008, Britney was put under conservatorship following a public breakdown (& a year of erratic behavior like shaving her head & attacking a paparazzo's car with an umbrella.)
- FreeBritney.net, launched in 2009, arguing that Britney did not need a conservatorship this far into her life and career.
 - In the years since, devoted fans combed her posts for clues about her feelings on her health, wellbeing and thoughts on her continued conservatorship, camped outside the courthouse, made podcasts/IG accounts devoted to #freeBritney, etc...
- Part of fans' connection to Britney was cultivated by a following who bonded with her at a formative age & has remained loyal since.

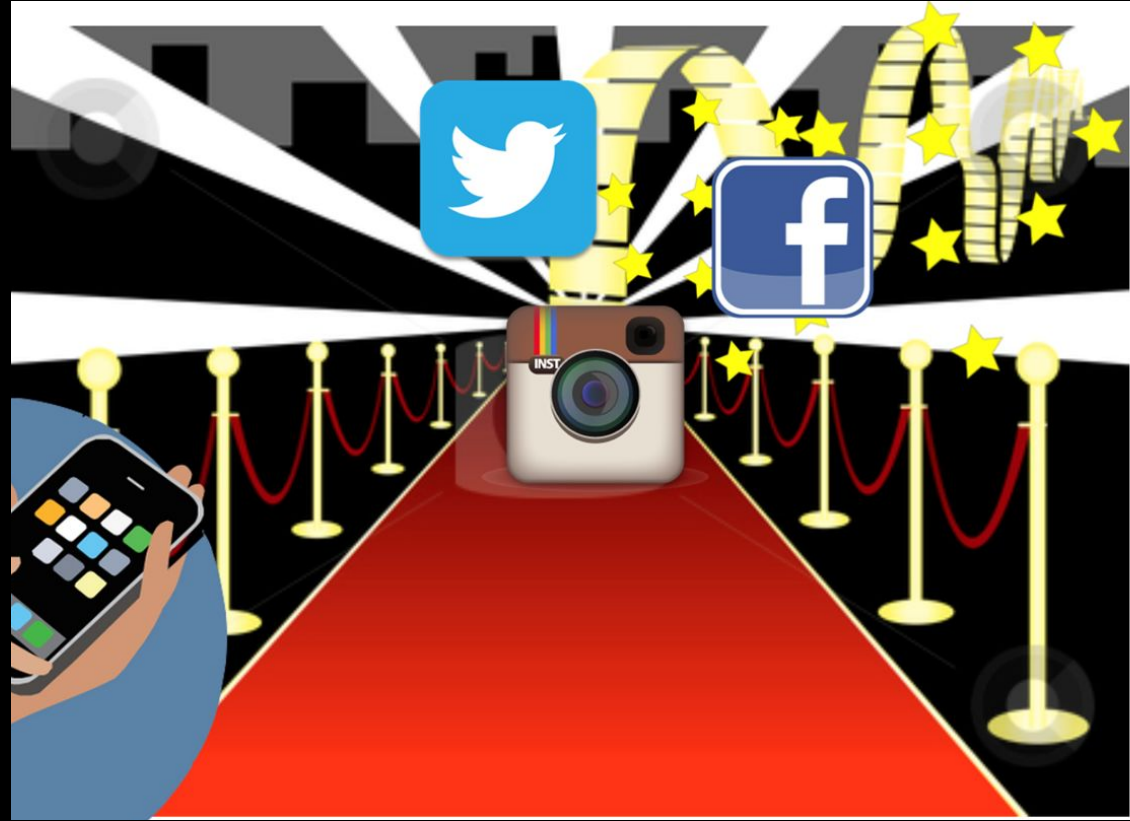


Celebrity news has shifted a lot in the last 25 years.

We've moved from the paparazzi as the sole outlet of info on celebrities' private lives to a world in which celebs invite us in & engage with fans through their social media.



Do you think
that social
media helps or
hurts
celebrities?
Explain.



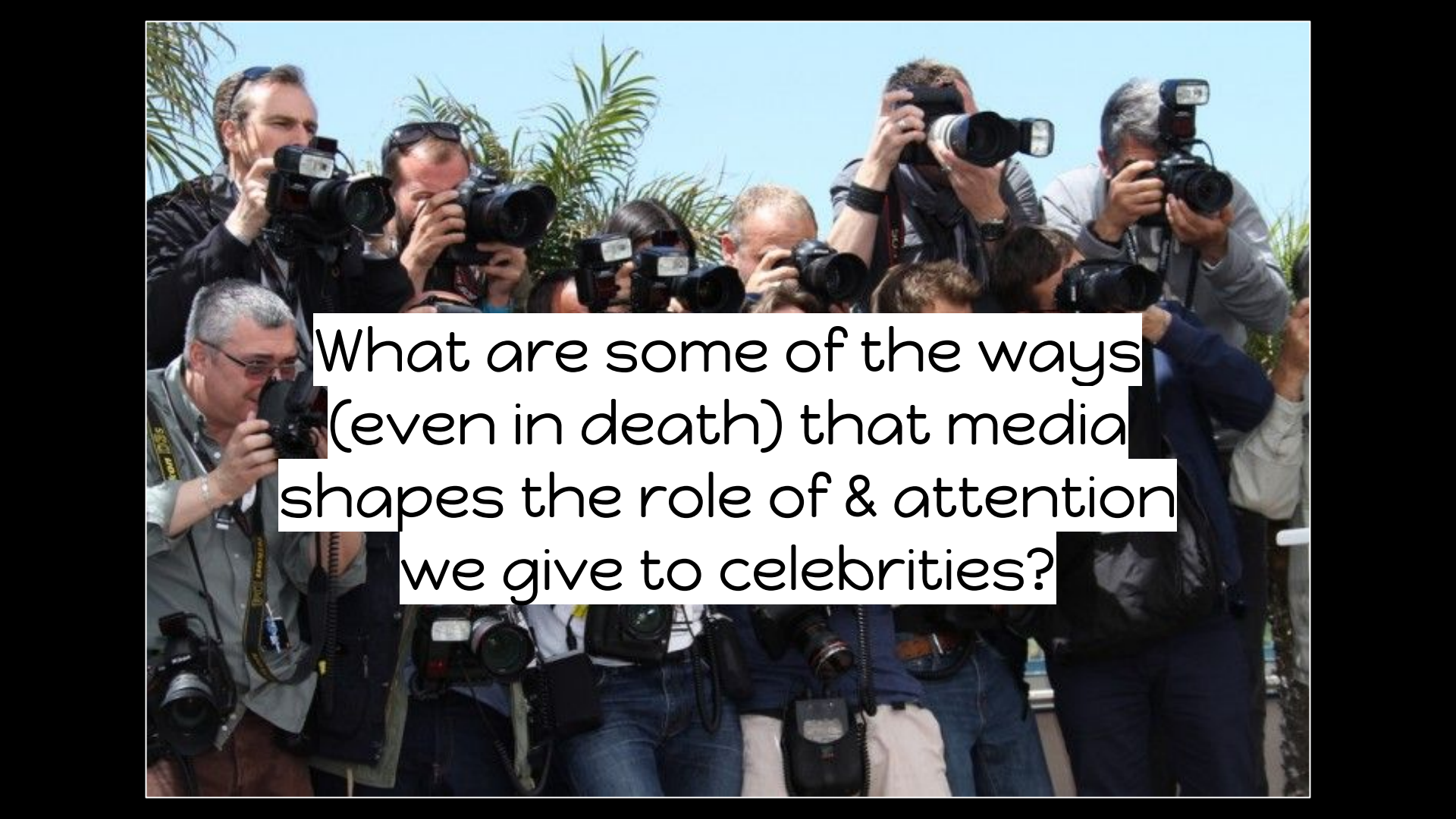


The Kardashian family is an example of
American industriousness.

(“Industriousness” = hard work & business savvy)



Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg,
and Elon Musk are examples of
American industriousness.

A group of photographers, mostly men, are gathered outdoors under a clear blue sky. They are all holding professional cameras with large lenses and flashes, pointing them towards the camera. Some are wearing sunglasses on their heads. The background shows some green foliage. The overall scene suggests a high-profile event or a media scrum.

What are some of the ways
(even in death) that media
shapes the role of & attention
we give to celebrities?

Are there any celebrities whose death YOU would genuinely mourn?

Why do you think celebrity deaths trigger widespread mourning?



Notable celebrity deaths

The New York Times

Betty White Recalled as Trailblazer With a Love for Life

"The world looks a little different now," said the actor Ryan Reynolds, who was one of many to pay tribute to the actress who died on Friday.

Give this article



Ryan Reynolds and Betty White on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" in 2010. Paul Drinkwater/NBCU Photo Bank via Getty Images

Kobe Bryant: NBA legend dies in helicopter crash aged 41

- Star's daughter, Gianna, also among victims of crash
- [Kobe Bryant: a life in pictures](#)
- [LA Lakers fans gather to pay tribute](#)



■ [Kobe Bryant leaves memories of stellar basketball career - video obituary](#)

The NBA, and much of America, was in shock on Sunday after [Kobe Bryant](#), one of the greatest basketball players in history, died in a helicopter crash. He was 41.



© GETTY IMAGES / DIA DIPASUPLI

DRAKE, MEEK MILL, LIL UZI VERT & OTHER CELEBRITIES PAY TRIBUTE TO JUICE WRLD

2 YEARS AGO IN MUSIC
WORDS BY SARAH OSEI

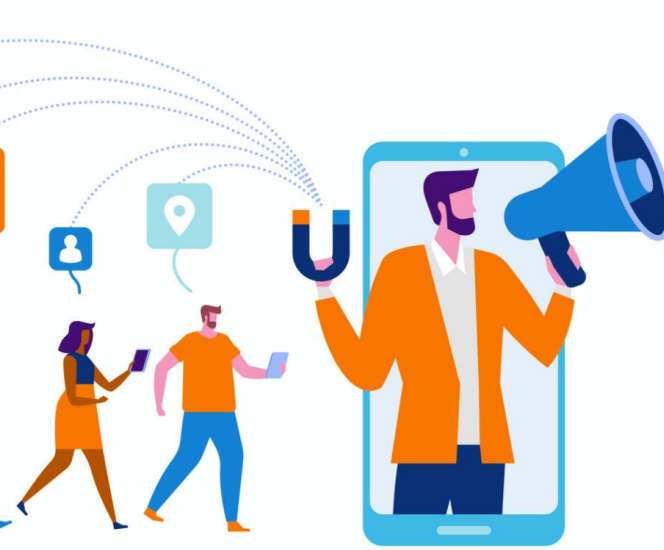
The world is still in shock after Juice WRLD suddenly passed away. Earlier this week, [TMZ](#) broke the tragic news that the rapper suffered a seizure at Chicago's Midway Airport and was pronounced dead after paramedics rushed him to a hospital.

Juice WRLD, whose real name was Jarad Anthony Higgins, had just turned 21-years-old on Monday, December 2. The rapper was at the start of a promising career, following his break-out success last year with the single "Lucid Dreams." His sudden death came as a huge shock to his friends, fans, celebrities, and hip-hop peers alike, and the news was swiftly followed by an outpouring of tributes and condolences to the young rapper.

A photograph of Michael Jackson performing on stage. He is wearing a white, sequined jacket and is playing a white electric guitar. He has his signature curly hair and is looking down with a slight smile. The background is a dark blue stage light.

Forbes

**Forbes:
Highest Paid
Dead
Celebrities of
2021**

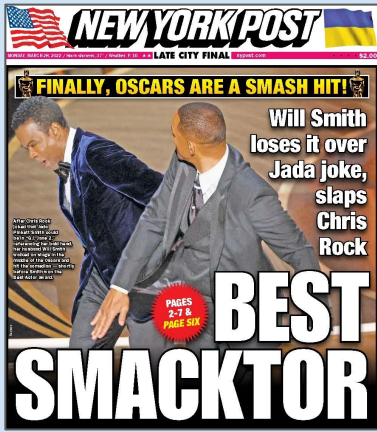


Does it influence you to see a celebrity endorsing a product? Why or why not?

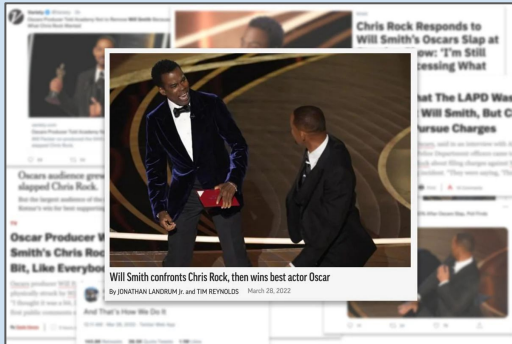
Would you purchase a product because of a celebrity wearing/using/endorsing it?



Do you follow celebrity scandals?
Why or why not?



“The Slap”, Oscars 2022



ENTERTAINMENT

Will Smith banned from attending the Oscars for 10 years after slapping Chris Rock on stage



Johnny Depp v. Amber Heard trial

Depp sued Heard over an essay she published in *The Washington Post* in 2018 about sexual violence, in which she described herself as a “public figure representing domestic abuse.” Though Depp wasn’t named in the article, he argued that it clearly alluded to him, damaging his reputation & career. Depp claimed Heard was the abuser, not him. Heard countersued.

After a 3 week trial, all of which was aired live, the jury found BOTH Depp & Heard liable for defamation. The jury awarded Depp \$10 million in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages (the judge reduced the punitive damages to \$350,000, which is the cap in VA.) Heard was awarded \$2 million in compensatory damages and no punitive damages.



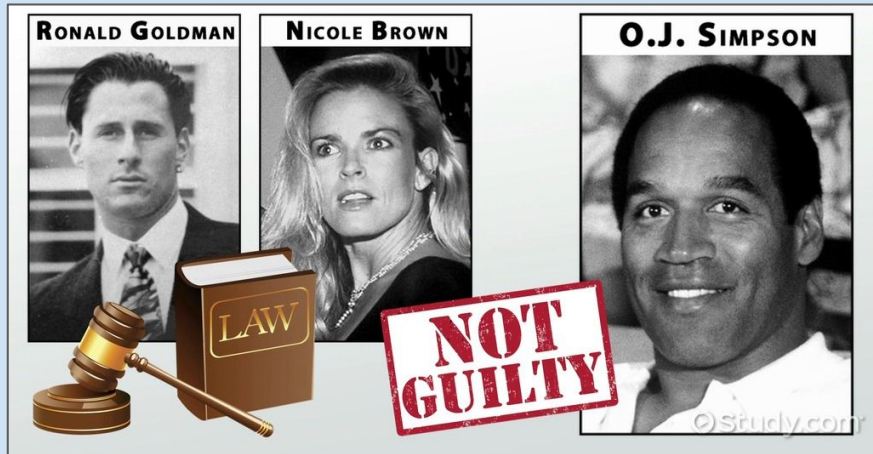
Do you think that celebrities & famous people get the same treatment when it comes to the law as regular people?

Should they?
Why or why not?



The O.J. Simpson case

The “trial of the century”



In 1995, former NFL player, broadcaster & actor was tried & acquitted for the murder his former wife and her friend.

Simpson was charged with the murders on June 17, 1994 after investigators found a blood-stained glove on his property.

When he didn't turn himself in, he became the object of a low-speed pursuit in a white Bronco. TV stations interrupted coverage of the 1994 NBA Finals to broadcast live coverage of the pursuit, which was watched by an estimated 95 million people.





The “most publicized” criminal trial in history - all 133 days of courtroom testimony were televised. Foreign leaders like Margaret Thatcher & Boris Yeltsin eagerly gossiped about the trial. When Yeltsin stepped off his plane to meet Pres. Clinton in 1995, the first question he asked was, "Do you think O. J. did it?"

When the verdict of "not guilty," was read, 91% of all people watching tv in the US were glued to the unfolding scene in the L.A. courtroom.



Why do you think people/media
get so riled up & invested in
celebrity scandals?

Evolution of Celebrities & Media



When did celebrity/hero obsession begin?

- People have always been intrigued by celebrities. Thousands of years ago, one of the best ways to gain fame was through title (**leaders**) or to be a **warrior** whose actions and bravery directly impacted the lives of the masses.
 - Leaders saw fame as important, motivating force. The quest for fame propelled them to greater accomplishments.



Alexander the Great

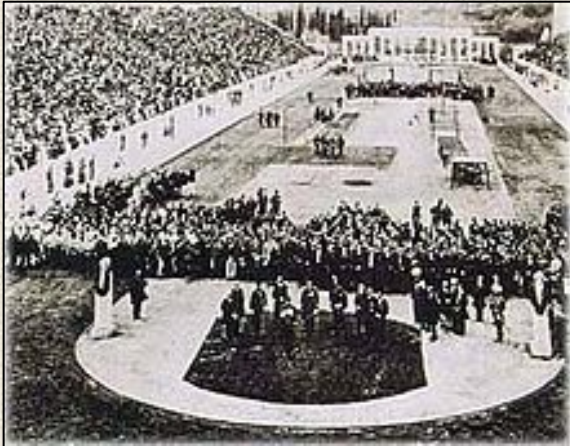


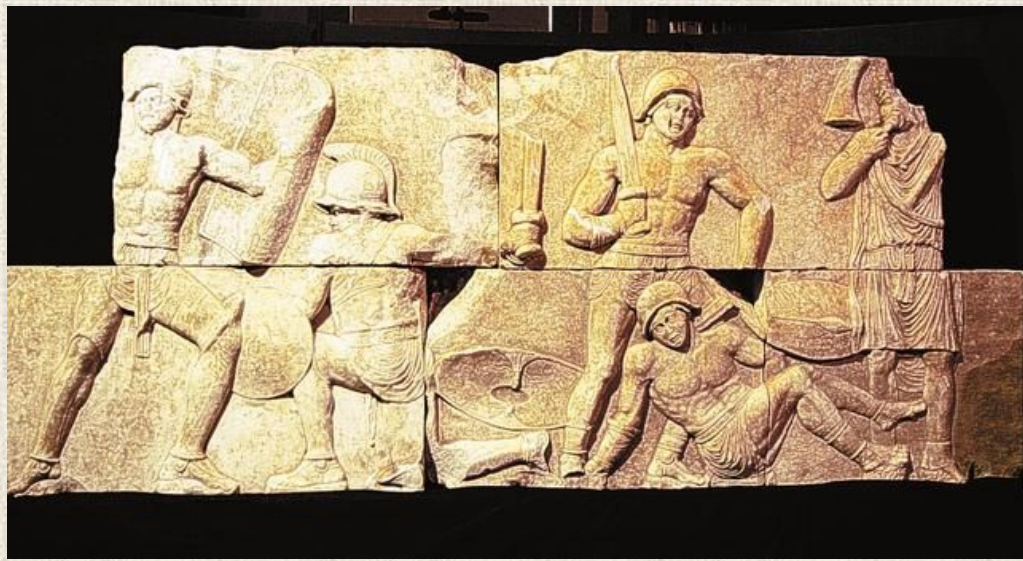
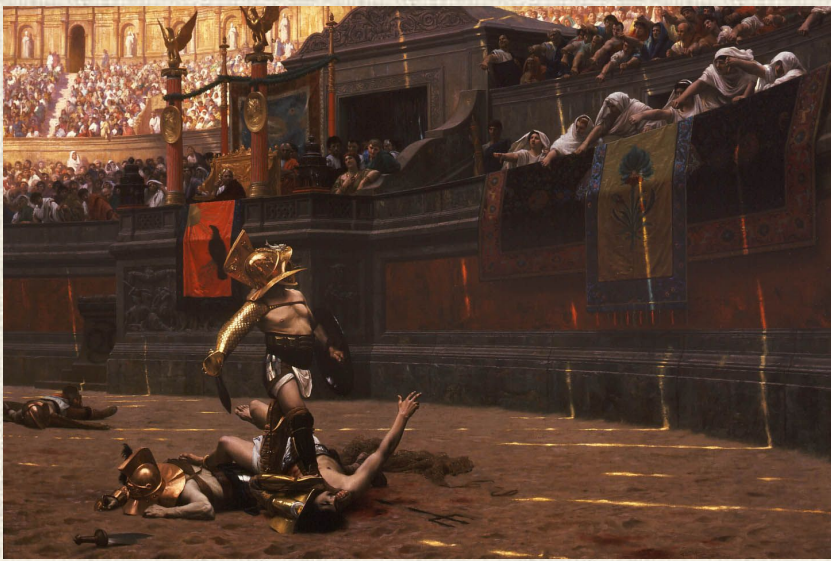
Julius Caesar



Constantine the Great

- Some of the first celebrities were warriors in the ancient Olympic Games.
- These **Olympians** were given the red-carpet treatment after the Games.
 - When they returned home, part of the city wall was demolished so they did not have to use the gates like “ordinary mortals.” They also won free meals for life.





- **Gladiators** also gained fame in the Roman era. News of their battles spread through word of mouth, boys idolized them and took lessons in fighting at gladiator schools, while women pursued them.

Ancient Romans celebrated their most famous, powerful citizens by imprinting their faces on coins and immortalizing them in sculptures or artwork.



The Dying Gaul, formerly known as the Dying Gladiator, an ancient Roman marble copy of a lost bronze Hellenistic sculpture commissioned between 230 BC and 220 BC.

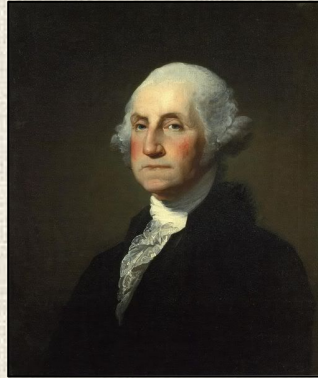
- In the ensuing centuries, **artists, athletes, writers, rulers, discoverers, and conquerors** became celebrities.
 - These individuals benefited from a growing interest in science, religion & culture.
- By the mid-16th century, dramatic shifts were happening in science, religion, and culture.
 - The Elizabethan Era saw popular theater become a major source of entertainment for the masses. In this era, William Shakespeare became London's most celebrated playwright.



- Celebrity, as we know the term, began to appear in the United States in the 18th century.
- 18th century American celebrities generally fell into two categories: **politicians & preachers** (who were in many ways, America's first entertainers.)



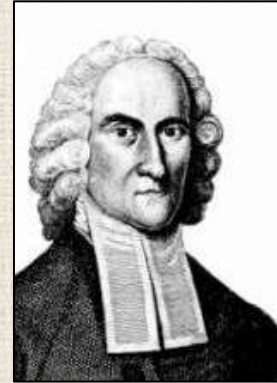
Ben Franklin



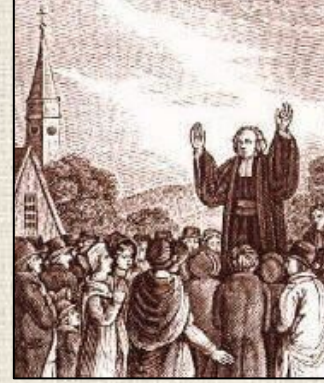
G. Washington



Rev. George
Whitefield



Rev. Jonathan
Edwards



Why politicians?



Early political celebrities included George Washington, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, etc. – men who sought to leave a lasting mark on the nation.

- America's obsession with political celebrity began when we broke away from England.
- In a nation without royalty (the celebrities of the Old World), those with political aspirations had to stand out if they hoped to be elected by popular vote.
 - Without a well-established family name or royal line, **what helped to distinguish people was their character** (integrity, honesty, courage) & **actions/service**.

Why preachers?

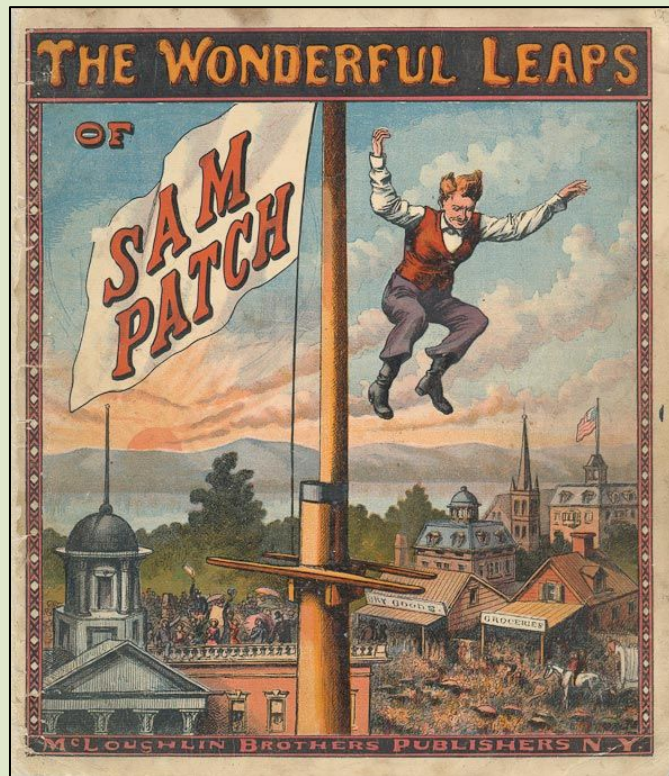
- In the 18th c., true media love was with travelling preachers.
 - To spread “the Word,” preachers didn’t just stand and drone on from the pulpit; **they gave engaging, fiery sermons** and made sure that newspapers reprinted their sermons and published detailed accounts of their travels.
- Rev. George Whitefield was one of the fathers of Evangelicalism and was as close to a superstar as one could be in the 18th century.
 - He once preached to a crowd of 30,000 in Boston during a colonial tour.
 - His fame was certainly helped by the fact that his message was popular – that salvation was universally attainable.
 - He also published hundreds of his 18,000 sermons, letters, journals and several biographies.



- By mid-19th century, American celebrities included well-known people in society who were glamorous or fashionable.
 - *By the 19th century, the MEDIA began making celebrities rather than celebrities using the media to reach the public.*
 - i.e., the press choosing to write a story on a wealthy socialite vs. a preacher asking a newspaper to print his speech to get it out to a bigger audience
- As literacy rates continued to improve, more people amused themselves with reading newspapers and magazines, increasing the fame of these new celebrities.

EXAMPLE: Sam Patch (1807-1829)

- Patch was a poor cotton mill worker with no remarkable talent other than his penchant for jumping off bridges, mill dams, and ships' masts and surviving (with one notable exception!)
- In the news-hungry 19th century, he was propelled to national fame. He became a true press spectacle.
 - In 1829, he bowed to a crowd of 10,000, kissed the American flag and jumped 120 feet into Niagara Falls.
 - Newspapers around the country called him “The Yankee Leaper” and “The New Jersey Jumper.”
 - If Patch was scheduled to jump in a particular town, it was covered in handbills and ads.
 - Newspapers called his stunts the greatest feats of their kind ever attempted by man.



ANOTHER LEAP!

Sam Patch against the World!

"Some things can be done as well as others!"

SAM PATCH,

HAVING returned from Jumping over Niagara Falls, has determined to convince the citizens of Rochester that he is the real "Simon Pure," by *Jumping off the Falls* in this village, from the rocky point in the middle of the Genesee River into the gulph below, a distance of 100 feet? This extraordinary feat will be performed on Friday, the 6th of November next, at 2 o'clock, *precisely*, in the afternoon. Sam assures the world there can be "no mistake!" He "goes the whole hog!"—and, unlike too many politicians of the present day, he "turns no somersets" in his progress! He goes as straight as an arrow!

He puts off the jump till after election, out of regard to all parties. Let every man do his duty at the Polls, and Sam will afterwards do his at the Falls!

Subscription papers will be left at the different taverns, where gentlemen who feel disposed to witness the spectacle, will please subscribe, and pay the money (however small) to the Landlord. If Sam does not jump, the Landlords will return the money to those who give it—so there is no mistake!

SAMUEL PATCH,
of Patterson, N. J.

oct 29

HIGHER YET! Sam's Last Jump.

"Some things can be done as well as others."

There's no



Mistake in

SAM PATCH.

OF the truth of this he will endeavour to convince the good people of Rochester and its vicinity, next **Friday, Nov. 13, at 2 o'clock P.M.**

- Sadly, Patch plummeted to his death attempting his second jump into the Genesee River when he was only 22 years old.
 - Before his fateful jump, he'd compared himself to Napoleon and had decided that he, Patch, was more courageous.

ANTI-MASONIC ENQUIRER.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1830.

Sam Patch.—The body of this unfortunate man, was found near the mouth of the Genesee River, after being in the water about 5 months. The body was in a state of perfect preservation, not at all bloated, or in the least changed. The black handkerchief was tied round his loins as when he made his fatal jump.

- After his death, a wave of worry and contrition swept the Northeast as the public started wondering if they were somehow responsible for his death. People began blaming the media for its pressure and hype, for driving Patch to his death.
 - (Sound familiar? Marilyn Monroe, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse, etc.)

- By the **late 19th century**, looking to fill the pages of daily newspapers, reporting focused more and more on the careers and personal lives of stars & stories of notorious criminals.
 - Lots of interesting folks to report on: famous outlaws like Jesse James, Wild West legends Buffalo Bill Cody and Doc Holliday, the many publicity stunts of PT Barnum, serial killer Jack the Ripper, and a host of other athletes, businessmen, and show biz folks.



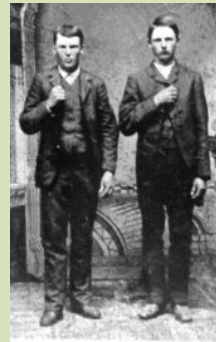
PT Barnum



Sarah Bernhardt



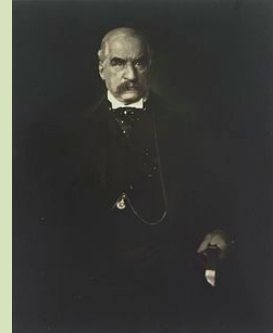
John Sullivan



Jesse/Frank James



Billy the Kid



JP Morgan

Early 1900s
fan magazine

Tabloid Newspapers

Modern
tabloid
papers



- By World War I (1910s), improvements in print technology led to an increase in tabloid news.
- Hollywood film studios also began cashing in on Americans' growing fascination with stars by publishing stories about their leading actors.

Movie fan magazines

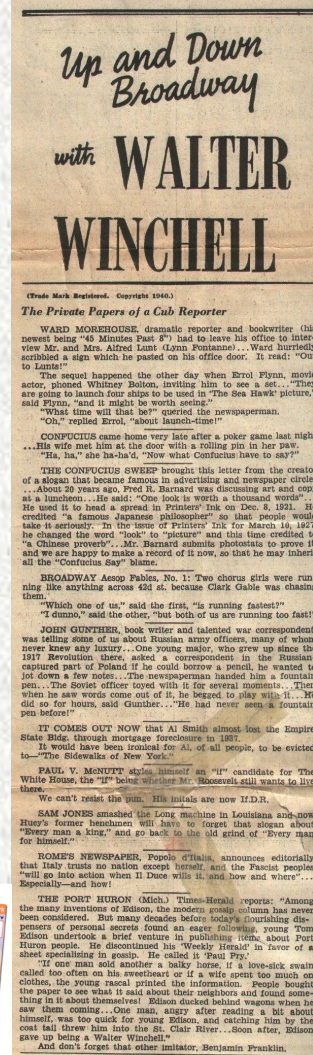


- In 1911 the first true movie fan magazine debuted.
- Fan magazines published interviews with the stars, gossip columns focused on the personal lives/careers of the stars.
 - Gave rise to the idea of celebrity culture.

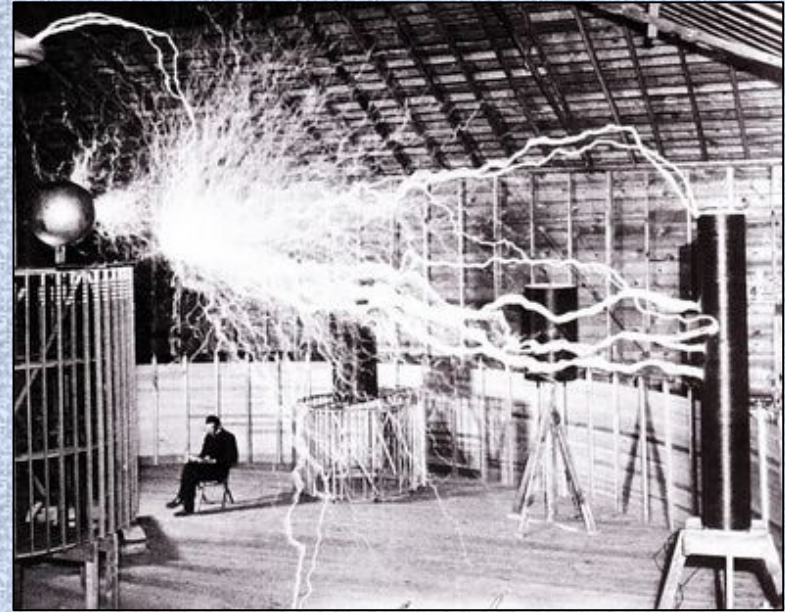


Walter Winchell – gossip columnist

- Winchell was the most famous/influential gossip columnist in the 1920s.
 - He wrote 6 columns a week that appeared in nearly 2,000 newspapers nationwide.
 - By the 1930s, he had a Sunday radio show which enabled him to reach nearly 50 million homes.
 - “Feeding the public’s craving for scandal and gossip, he [was] the most powerful & feared journalist of his time.”
 - Winchell helped foster the rise of more modern publications like *US* and *People*.



Modern Media & Celebrity (late 19th-early 20th century)



- The invention of film, the radio & eventually the tv, brought the public the sounds and images of the famous.
 - *Consider, how did those inventions change the public's relationship with celebrities?*

New media (radio, movies & tv)

- New media opened up new opportunities for celebrity.
- Along with those new technologies came a very important addition to celebrity: INTIMACY.
 - **The introduction of radio meant you could actually hear a famous person's voice** – even if he was 1000 miles away.
 - When FDR spoke to the nation during his Fireside Chats of the 1930s and 1940s, he seemed to speak to people individually in their own parlors and living rooms.
 - **The invention of movies created thousands of stars.** Famous, beautiful people appeared on the screen of the local movie theater each week and people felt like they knew them. Their small gestures, the subtleties of their faces in close-up **allowed Americans to connect to these new stars in a more intimate way.**

Television

- The introduction of **TV** (which grew in popularity in the mid-1940s) further promoted celebrity:
 - **Provided viewers with a more intimate experience than radio or print media** by putting familiar faces into people's living rooms.
 - **Elevated the celebrity to imaginary friend status** (para-social relationships)...a major change in the history of celebrity worship.

Stars like The Beatles and Elvis were able to use these new mediums as a tool to increase their fame through a combination of tv, radio, newspapers, magazines, live shows, the music charts, record shops and film appearances.



Sept. 9, 1956



Feb. 9, 1964

LIFE

AMERICAN BOY'S ADVENTURE
WITH AN AFRICAN TRIBE
BLAZING NEW PAGE
IN THE LEGEND OF LIZ



RICHARD BURTON
WITH ELIZABETH TAYLOR
ON CLEOPATRA SET

ALSO THIS WEEK
Where NOT To Eat
When You're Out Driving
Australia Sets Sail
for America's Cup
TRIUMPH OF A SON'S FAITH IN HIS FATHER
by ROBERT WALLACE
APRIL 13 • 1962 • 20¢

The mainstream media have long been fascinated by celebrities. For example, this 1962 *Life* cover featuring superstars Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton during the filming of “Cleopatra.”

Changes in celebrity coverage

(1960s -> present)

By the 1960s, ownership of fan magazines shifted from being tools of promotion for the movie studios (interested in protecting their movie stars and increasing their fame) to privately owned businesses. (Those businesses were driven by a desire to sell magazines & make money, NOT to protect/promote their stars.)



- Tabloid reporting meant that more areas of celebrities' lives fell under scrutiny, including their personal lives.
 - The business became making money for the magazine, whatever the cost to the star.

Rise of the paparazzi



The term “paparazzi” came from a 1960 movie. One of the characters in the film, Paparazzo, was an overly intrusive freelance photographer. (That character’s name came from a negative term for a large buzzing mosquito.)



Rise of the Paparazzi



- In the 1980s & 1990s, gossip magazines & shows began to demand pictures of famous people going about their daily lives. The paparazzi met that need.
 - PROS: helped boost stars' profiles
 - CONS: no privacy, personal space, risk to reputation when caught in compromising positions
- This increase in stories & info about stars' lives only served to increase people's thirst for celebrity gossip further.

- From childhood to adulthood, Britney has lived in the public eye.
 - Discovered” on Star Search at the age of 10 -> Mickey Mouse Show at the age of 12 -> signed with first major label at the age of 16
 - First big hit “Baby One More Time” was released at the age of 16
- From the age of 16 on, Spears had between 35-40 paparazzi following her 24-7 to get the perfect shot.
 - US Weekly had a \$140,000 weekly budget for celebrity photos and a single exclusive photo could earn a paparazzi 10s of thousands of dollars.

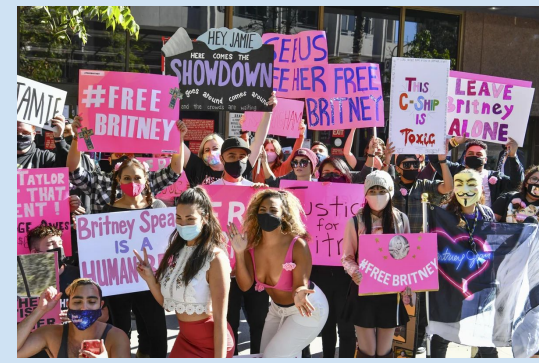
CASE STUDY:

Britney Spears





This one photo netted the photographer \$400,000



Paparazzi stalked, teamed up in groups, surrounded, jostled, yelled at/catcalled stars to get a response & photo



britneyspears I just want you guys a little secret ... as people we all want the fair and by the way I've posted .. seems to look and be pretty ... I think that's what we all want!!!! That was one of my most beautiful traits ... no matter how small it was when I was young ... I want to take of me and my

Celebrities take control of the narrative

(late 1990s-present)



- With the growth of the internet, many celebrities have embraced social media as a way to take charge of their own image.

How does social media HELP celebrities?



- Enables them to share aspects of their professional & personal lives with their fans
- Able to control the narrative & show themselves as they want and to speak to fans directly in their own words
- Helps develop and build a connection with their fans

Celebrities, Icons & Heroes

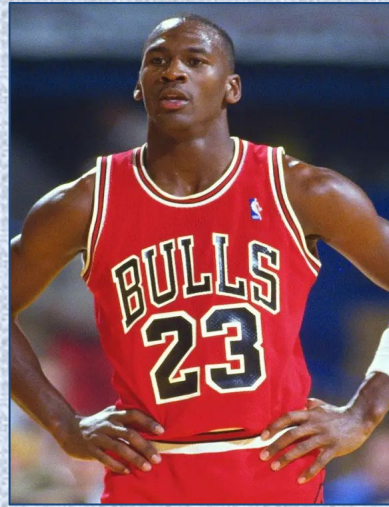
What's the difference?

- **Icon**: a person or object which/who is important as a symbol of certain beliefs or concepts.

- Icons generally symbolize something that Americans value.
- Icons usually have a positive/successful image and sense of permanence
- Many people become icons because they have overcome some type of adversity (i.e., rags to riches, performing despite great trials, etc.)
- Cultural icons have a sacred or near-religious influence within the culture



How can a person be an American icon?



Consider the icons above. What makes these people iconic? What do they symbolize for Americans? How do they in many ways define or speak to our values or beliefs?

Pick **ONE** of the people below & answer the questions.



1. What is the person known for professionally?
2. What does the person symbolize for Americans? How do they speak to American values or beliefs?

How can an inanimate object be an American icon?

Consider the icons below. What makes these object iconic? What do they symbolize for Americans? How do they in many ways define or speak to our values or beliefs?



Pick ONE of the images & answer the questions.



1. What do we know about the object? (How would you describe it to someone who wasn't familiar with the image?)
2. What does the object symbolize for Americans? How does the object speak to American values or beliefs?

How would
you define
the term
“hero”?

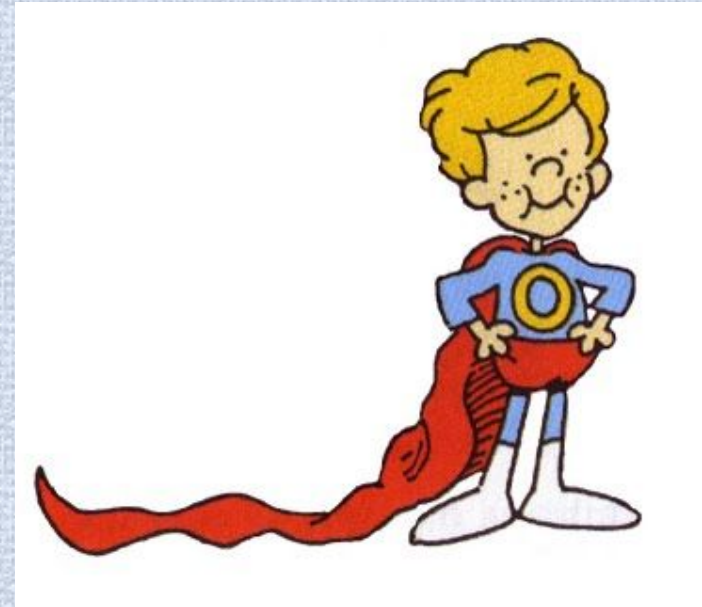


(What makes someone a hero?
What characteristics do you
associate with heroes?)



- Heroism is about

- character (not fame or glory)
- service (working for the good of others)
- bravery, facing a challenge and digging deep to find the courage, wisdom or inspiration to rise above
- making the world a better place



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

Heroes
of deed

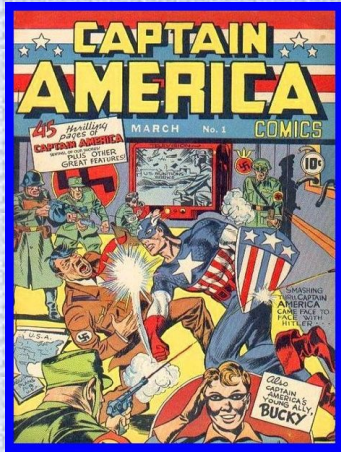


Celebrities
(media created
characters)

Heroes of Deed

People who made a contribution that goes above and beyond the call of duty.

EXAMPLES:

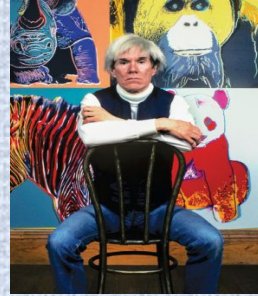
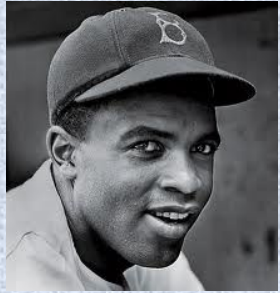


Fictitious superheroes like Captain America, Superman, or Wonder Woman



First responders (fire fighters, military personnel, 9/11 first responders, hospital workers during Covid-19 shutdowns, etc.)

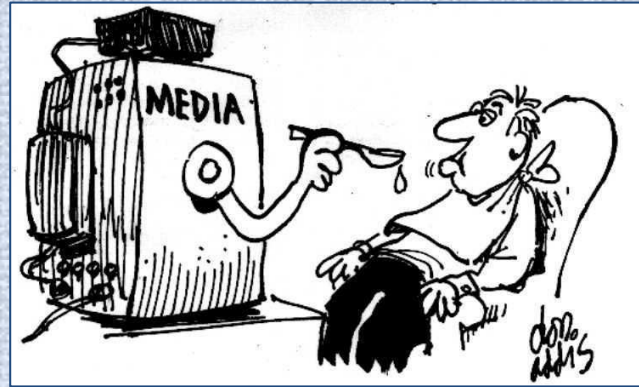
EXAMPLE: Cultural Rebels



- Rebellious heroes of deed:

- People who act out against injustices in the dominant culture. They typically succeed in their goals with great costs or, in some cases, suffer martyrdom before their goals can be reached.
- Examples (pictured above): Jackie Robinson, Katharine Hepburn, Billie Jean King, Langston Hughes, Andy Warhol, Colin Kaepernick

Many say that heroes of deed are a dying breed.
Today, we more often celebrate people whose fame
is generated by media.



→ Can you think of an example of someone whose fame is in large part generated & increased by media attention?

Celebrities (media-created figures)

- People who often have talent but that may not be what they're best known for.
- Fame represents values & qualities are the fad in at the time.
- Their celebrity is typically short-lived, lasting only as long as the nation's interest lasts.

Examples: “Damn, Daniel,” reality tv stars, Kevin Hart, Charli D’Amelio, Ninja, Selena Gomez, James Charles, Travis Scott, Drake, Nicki Minaj, Taylor Swift, Andrew Tate, Jimmy Fallon, etc.





Kim Kardashian and/or
Kanye West



Elon Musk (founder of Tesla,
SpaceX)

Talk with your table group

What makes each of these people an example of qualities/fads Americans value today?

Some famous people choose to use their platform for more than just advancing their career.

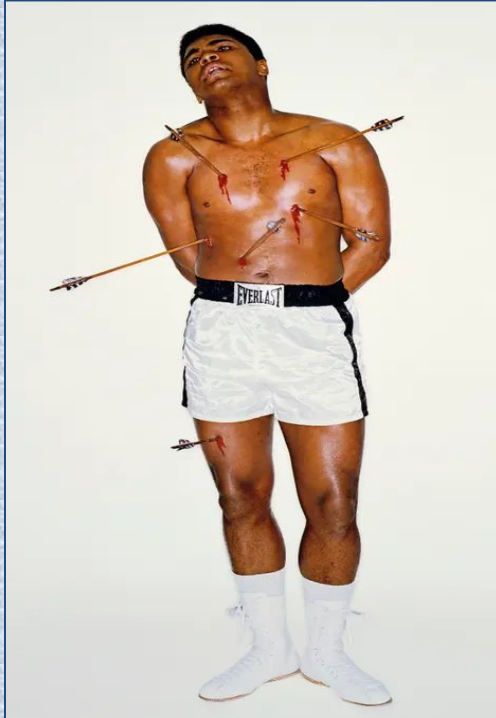
It is possible for a person to be BOTH a celebrity AND an icon/hero.

EXAMPLE: Celebrities who also became icons

- **Sports icons**: sport itself is key to their initial status or popularity, however, they often become associated with something else that goes beyond their athletic success
 - Examples: Muhammad Ali (boxing, refusing the draft, ban, Parkinsons), Billie Jean King (tennis star & crusader for equality for women in sports), Naomi Osaka (tennis & mental health), etc.



FIRST, an example of
celebrity turned icon...



What's next?

THEN, a chance to
explore a cultural icon
of your choosing...

**Project
Time**

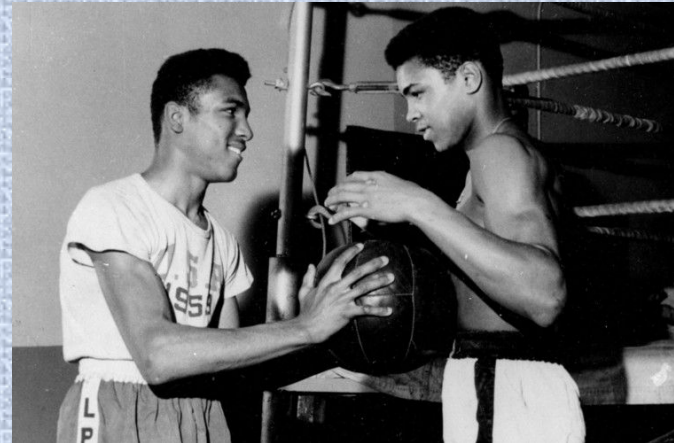
Muhammad Ali



The Making of a Sports Icon

Early Years

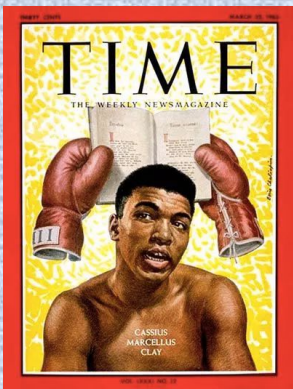
- Born Cassius Clay in 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Took up boxing at the age of 13.
 - Off duty police officer took him under his wing, introduced Clay to the integrated gym where he trained and 6 weeks after he started training, Clay won his first bout.
- By the age of 18, Clay had 2 Golden Gloves titles, 2 Amateur Athletic Union national titles and 100 wins/8 losses.



1960 Olympics



- Clay won the light heavyweight gold medal at the 1960 summer Olympics in Rome (at 18.)
 - When he returned home to segregated Kentucky, he wore his medal around his neck everywhere with pride.
 - Shortly after he arrived home, refused entry to a whites-only restaurant. Clay reportedly yelled “this medal don’t mean nothing!” and threw his medal into the Ohio River.
- After the Olympics, Clay turned pro & landed a sponsorship deal with some Louisville businessmen.
- From Oct. 1960-June 1963, he won all 19 fights he entered.



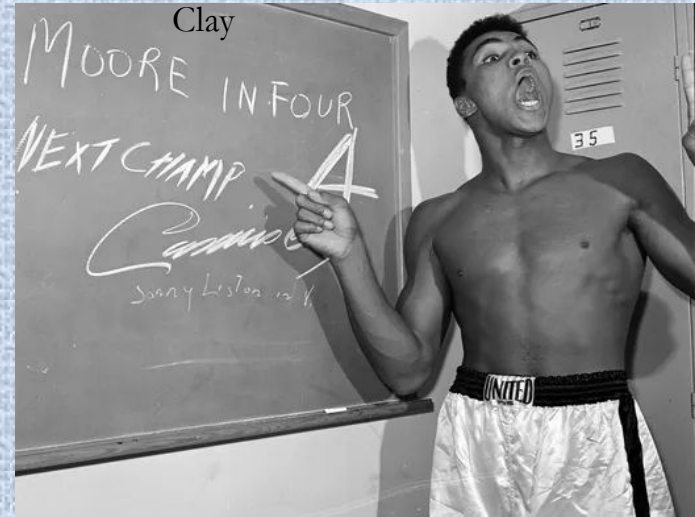
The Louisville Lip

"If you dream of beating me, you better wake up and apologize."

- Clay became known as a non-stop talker, a self-promoter and a poet.
 - Proclaimed himself to be "the greatest"
 - Boasted of his exploits, often in rhyme
 - Predicted the round in which he would beat his opponents
- "He had incredibly fast hands and cat-like reflexes," noted sportswriter Michael Silver. "His handsome face was rarely hit" – a point of pride he would often repeat in press conferences.



The Beatles visit Cassius



Clay



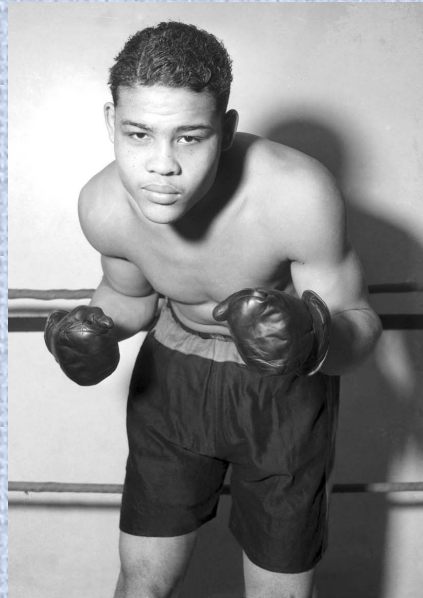
BoxingLegends TV



A different kind of athlete...

- Didn't fit the stereotypes applied to previous black boxers:

Joe Louis, the "Brown Bomber," heavyweight champ 1937-1949. Widely celebrated for his sportsmanship, modesty, humility and softspokenness.



Sonny Liston, the "Bear," heavyweight champ 1962-1964. Arrested 20+ times, 2 long prison terms where he learned to box. Intimidating in & out of the ring, menacing attitude & vicious punch.

- Ali was his own man, had his own opinions & wasn't afraid to say what he thought. (Early in his career, he told a reporter, "I don't have to be what you want me to be, I'm free to be the person I want to be.")

First Professional Fight

- Ali's first pro title fight in Feb. 1964 was against Sonny Liston (the reigning heavyweight champ)
 - The odds were stacked 7-1 against Clay.
- Undaunted, Clay wrote the following poem predicting his victory:
 - *"Ain't he ugly?! He's too ugly to be the world champ. He should be pretty like me!"*
 - *He even left a bear trap (for the "Bear") on Liston's front lawn prior to the fight to fuel the rivalry.*





Clay comes out to meet Liston & Liston starts to retreat,
if Liston goes back an inch farther he'll end up in a ringside
seat.

Clay swings with his left, Clay swings with his right,
Look at young Cassius carry the fight
Liston keeps backing, but there's not enough room,
It's a matter of time till Clay lowers the boom.

Now Clay lands with a right,
What a beautiful swing, and the punch raises the Bear clean out

Liston is still rising and the ref wears a frown,
For he can't start counting till Sonny goes down.

Now Liston is disappearing from view,
The crowd is going frantic,
But radar stations have picked him up,
Somewhere over the Atlantic.

Who would have thought when they came to the fight?
That they'd witness the launching of a human satellite.
Yes the crowd did not dream, when they put up the money,
That they would see a total eclipse of the Sonny.

Ali v. Liston

- Much of the boxing press corps skipped the fight, disgusted with Clay's antics & convinced that Clay would be demolished.
- No one expected Ali to go the distance, but Ali knocked Liston out, and promptly announced to the TV cameras, "I shook up the world!" & "I am the greatest!"



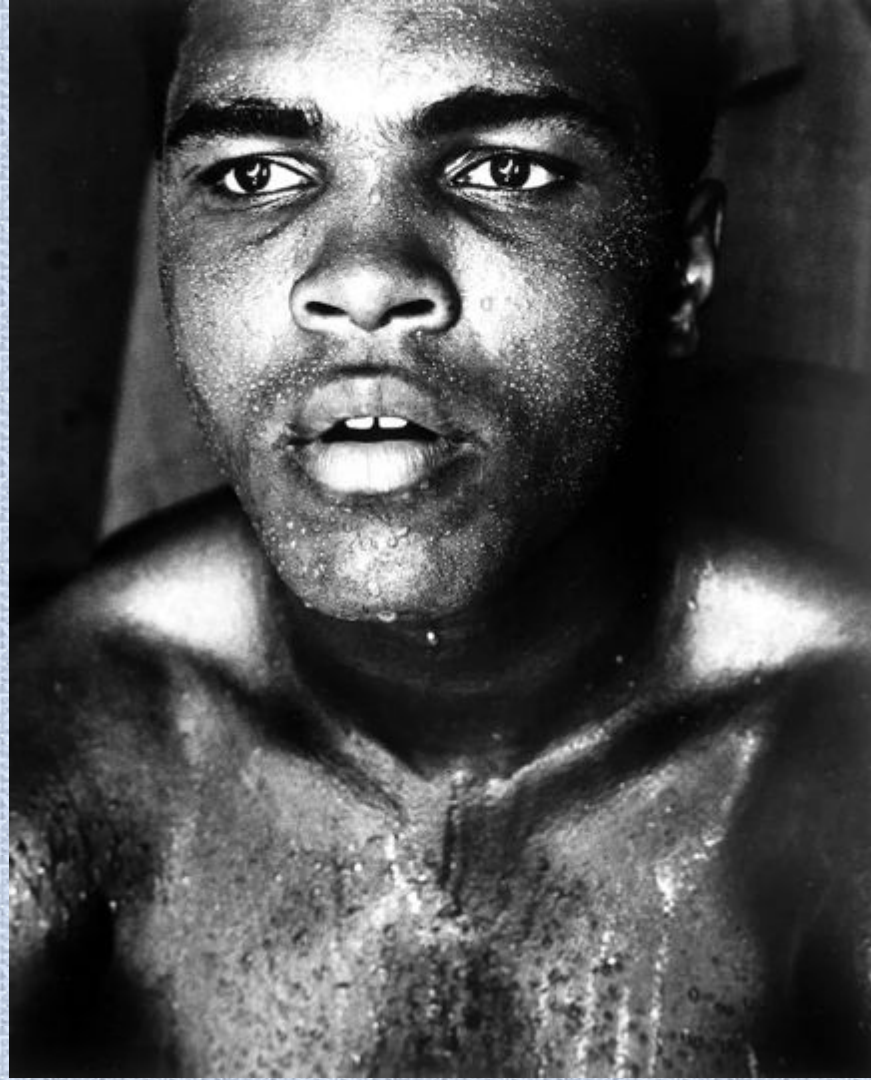
Ali gets the last word... (in his own words)



Career Stats

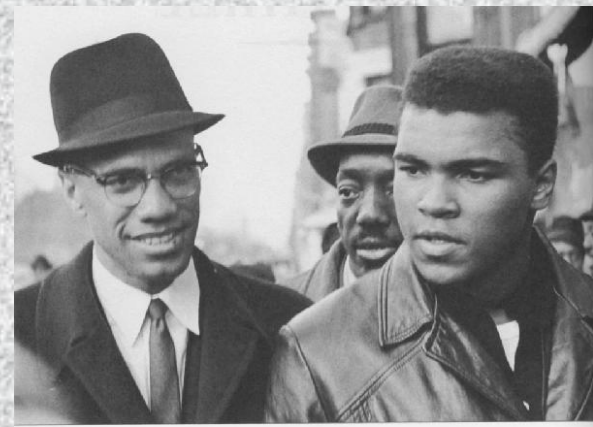
Ali defended his heavyweight title in 9 bouts from 1965-1967, including in a rematch with Liston in 1965.

- The 1965 fight against Liston lasted just 2 minutes & 8 seconds
- It was in this fight that he coined his signature phrase, “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee, you can’t hit what your eyes don’t see...” as a reference to his light-of-foot and quick punching style.



Ali & the Nation of Islam

- Ali became an outspoken member of the Nation of Islam, a black separatist movement that practiced the religion of Islam.
- The **Nation of Islam**:
 - **Wanted the complete separation of the races**
 - Believed that integration wouldn't work – instead, **argued that African-Americans had to take their fate into their own hands and learn to be self-sufficient.**
 - Voiced irritation at “all of this non-violent, begging-the-white-man kind of dying...all this sitting-in, sliding-in, wading-in, eating-in, diving-in, and all the rest.”
(Malcolm X)
 - Argued the key to self-knowledge was to know your **enemy (the white man and white supremacy.)**



New York, 1963. With Malcolm X.



In the words of Ali...

Ali: “I don’t hate rattlesnakes, I don’t hate tigers — I just know I can’t get along with them,” he said. “I don’t want to try to eat with them or sleep with them.”

Reporter: “You don’t think that we can ever get along?”

Ali: “I know whites and blacks cannot get along; this is nature.”

Reporter: “You like George Wallace? —————→

Ali: “Yes, sir. I like what he says. He says Negroes shouldn’t force themselves in white neighborhoods, and white people shouldn’t have to move out of the neighborhood just because one Negro comes. Now that makes sense.”

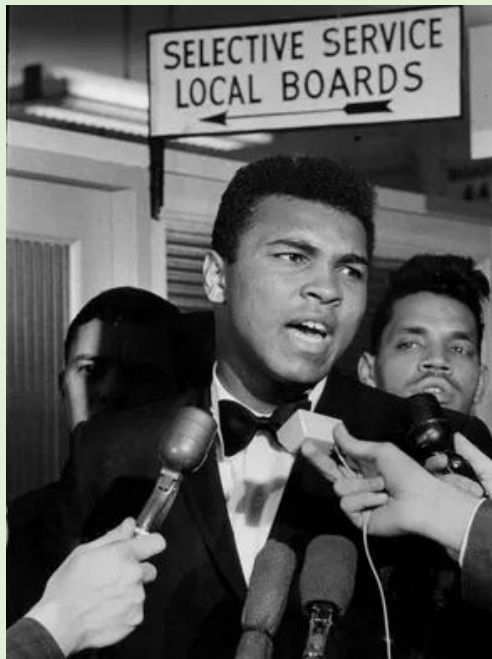


Wallace, 4 term gov. of Alabama, ran for president on a segregationist platform.

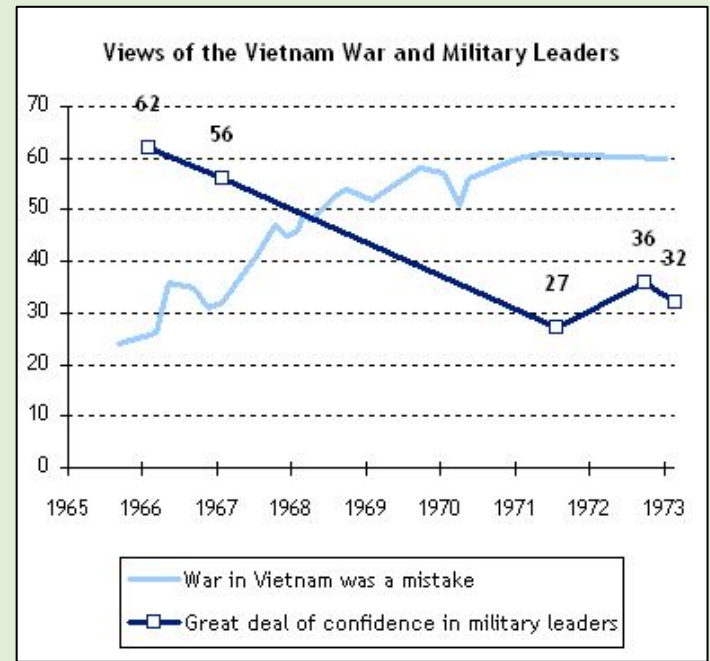
Cassius Clay becomes Muhammad Ali

- In 1964, Clay changed his name Muhammad Ali
- The media & many of his opponents refused to call him by his new name.
- Ali's parents also rejected his name change and denounced the Nation of Islam, saying they were cons who were exploiting their son.

“Cassius Clay is a slave name. I didn’t choose it, and I don’t want it. I am Muhammad Ali, a free name, and I insist people use it when speaking to me and of me!”



Ali & the Vietnam War



- By the mid-1960s, the country was split over the Vietnam War, and Ali quickly became part of the controversy and polarization.
- In 1967, Ali was called up to serve in Vietnam.
- At that time, roughly 500,000 troops were stationed in Vietnam and nearly 30,000 had been killed.

The New York Times

Ali Said It Will Be Easier

By ROBERT LIPSYTE

Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, Oct. 26—The end of an unusually fast first round that wiped out vague doubts he might be held about his return ring tonight. Muhammad Ali wondered only dancing and jabbing without

By where Ali could

fr an c i



Robert Lipsyte
Sportswriter, New York Times

do-a-half year diminish any did Ali. In fact, grown stronger ever.

secret pre- a paint- arroy and said:

tone of the news contained none of hant righteousness modesty that had er some of his pre- He said, "I didn't of his being out," he did not know had opened Quar- all snappy punch-

Perhaps more than any other of his fights, this one represented a triumph for the 28-year-old boxer whose problems began the morning after he won the championship from Sonny Liston nearly seven years ago,

and said: "I don't have to be what you me to be, I'm free to be ant."

tone of the news contained none of hant righteousness modesty that had er some of his pre- He said, "I didn't of his being out," he did not know had opened Quar- all snappy punch-



STOP

Ali's Protest in Historical Context

Race, Power and Protest



DR. KING FATALLY SHOT BY ASSASSIN IN MEMPHIS

U.S. Shocked, Saddened by Slaying, Johnson Says

Message Is Given Nation After Assassination

ANGUISH VOICED BY U.S. LEADERS

Shock, Grief, Is Reaction; Violence Feared

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING
Rifle Bullet Fells Crusader

King: Been to Mountaintop No Matter What Happens

Dies Hours After Injury; Troops Recalled

By DOUG STONE
MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Nobel Laureate Martin Luther King Jr., father of non-violence in the American civil rights movement, was killed by an assassin's bullet Thursday night.

King, 39, was hit in the neck by a bullet as he stood on the balcony of a motel here. He died less than an hour later in St. Joseph Hospital.

Gov. Buford Ellington immediately ordered 4,000 National Guard troops back into the city. A curfew, which was clamped on Memphis after a King-led march turned into a riot a week ago, was reimposed.

Police said incidents of violence, including several fire bombings were reported following King's death.

The 1964 Nobel Peace Prize winner was standing on the balcony of his motel here, where he had come to lead protests in behalf of the city's 1,300

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Johnson spoke Thursday night of an "American shocked and saddened" by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King as he condemned violence, lawlessness and divisiveness.

In a brief message to the nation via television and radio, Johnson disclosed that he is postponing a trip to Hawaii for a Vietnam strategy conference around midnight. He said he will leave sometime Friday.

The President appeared in the doorway of the White House offices, stern-faced and spoke on all television and radio networks.

"I ask every American citizen," he said, "to reject the blind violence that has struck down Dr. King, who lived by nonviolence."

The President urged prayers for peace and understanding in the land and said:

"We can achieve nothing by lawlessness and divisiveness among the American people." Humphreys said the slaying he said he hopes all Amer-

NEW YORK (AP) — The nation's civil rights and political leaders reacted with anguish, shock and grief Thursday night at the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis.

There also was fear that the slaying could lead to more violence.

"We have been saddened," President Johnson told the nation on radio and television. "I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck Dr. King who lived in nonviolence."

TRIP PUT OFF

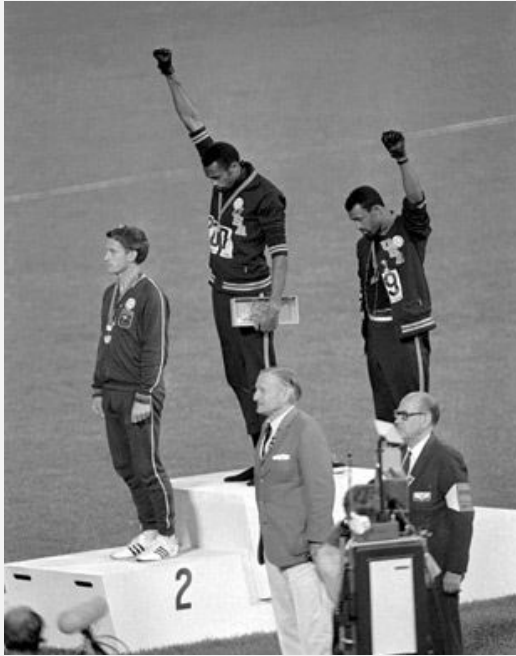
The President said he was postponing his trip to Hawaii, for a Vietnam strategy conference, until Friday. He had been scheduled to leave about midnight Thursday.

Vice President Hubert H. Hines, who was in Memphis, said he was

- America's racial politics changed a lot from 1964-1968.
- Racial unrest had broken out in LA in 1965; in Newark, New Jersey, Detroit, Michigan, and a dozen other cities in 1967.
- In April 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, protest and unrest occurred in more than 100 cities (frustration, anger, despair building)



The movement for Black Power & Black pride had begun by the late 1960s.



Black athletes at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City in 1968 had given the black power salute from the medals podium



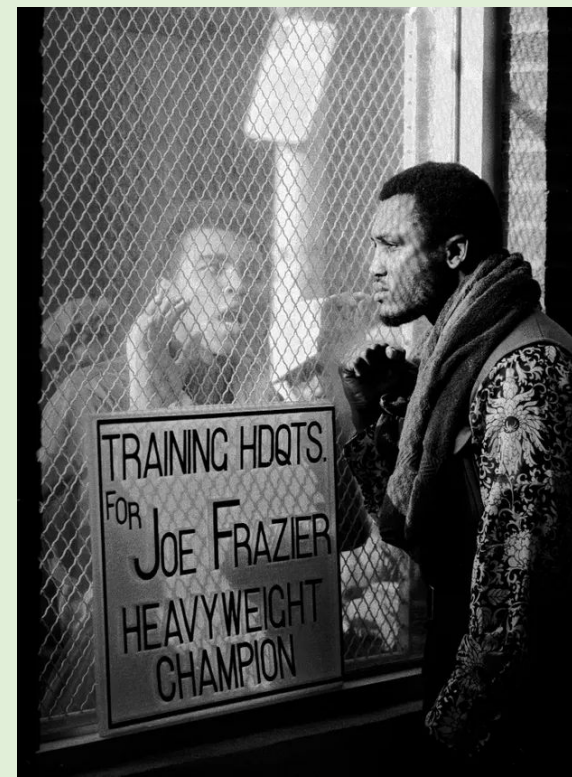
In the summer of 1968, the James Brown song, “Say It Loud, Say it Proud,” hit No. 1 on the R&B music chart.



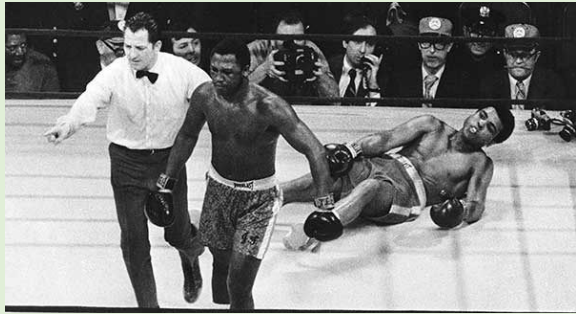
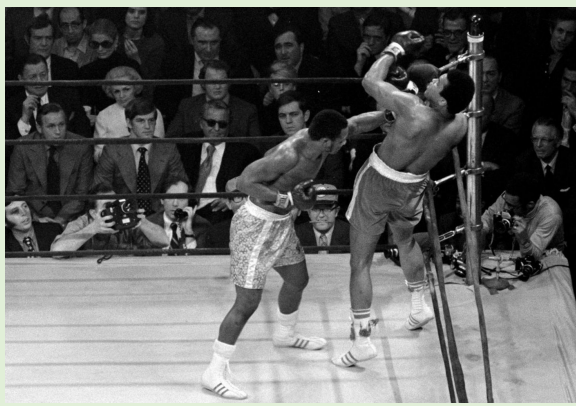
QUESTION: How is what Ali says in the video clip connected to how many black Americans felt at the time?

Ali v. Frazier (1970)

- Ali was allowed to return to the ring in 1970.
- In his 3rd fight back in the ring, he fought Joe Frazier in Madison Square Garden.
 - Frazier, with a record of 26–0, was the reigning heavyweight champion of the world. He was known as a ferocious fighter with a powerful left hook.
 - Ali, the former heavyweight champ, like Frazier was also undefeated, with a record of 31–0. (Ali had held the title from 1964-1967.)
- Lots of hype in the run up to the fight – question of who the true heavyweight champ was
 - In his trademark way, Ali trash talked and stoked the rivalry leading up to the fight: *“Frazier is so ugly that when he cries, the tears turn around and go down the back of his head.”*



Before their fight in 1971, Ali arrived to Frazier’s training gym in Philly to taunt his opponent. In the words of the photographer, “Ali was walking around outside trying to psych Frazier out but Frazier was this rock.”



Why was the fight significant?

- Billed as the biggest event in the history of boxing, Ali won the early rounds but Frazier knocked him to the mat in the 11th round and ultimately won.
- Ali sacrificed 3 ½ years in the prime of his career in exile – he made no excuses & lost with grace.

Fight of the Century

Some noteworthy facts from the first bout between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier.

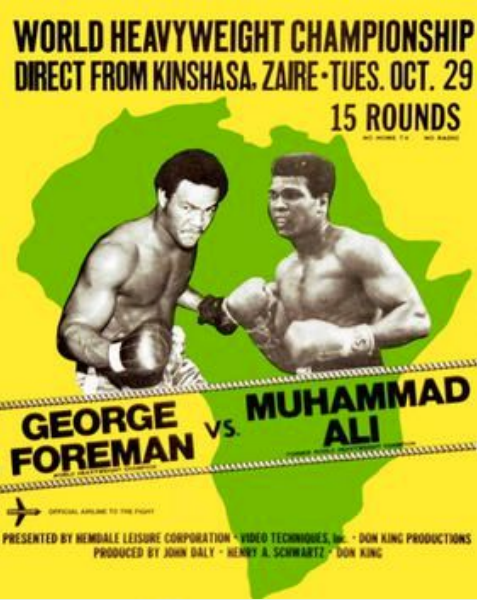
Date	March 8, 1971
Venue	Madison Square Garden
Joe Frazier's record	26-0, 23 KOs
Muhammad Ali's record	31-0, 25 KOs
Ringside seat (2016 dollars)	\$150 (\$886)
Scalper ringside (2016 dollars)	\$1,000 (\$5,908)
Crowd	20,455
Guaranteed purse (2016 dollars)	\$2.5 million (\$14.8 million)
Worldwide viewership	300 million
AP scorecard	9-5-1 Frazier
UPI scorecard	7-7-1 Draw
Knockdowns	Ali in Round 15
Result	Frazier by unanimous decision

Ali's most famous 1975 bout was the 'Rumble in the Jungle' against the mighty George Foreman, which no-one gave Ali a hope of winning.

(Foreman was feared throughout the boxing world; his previous 8 fights had not gone beyond the 2nd round!)

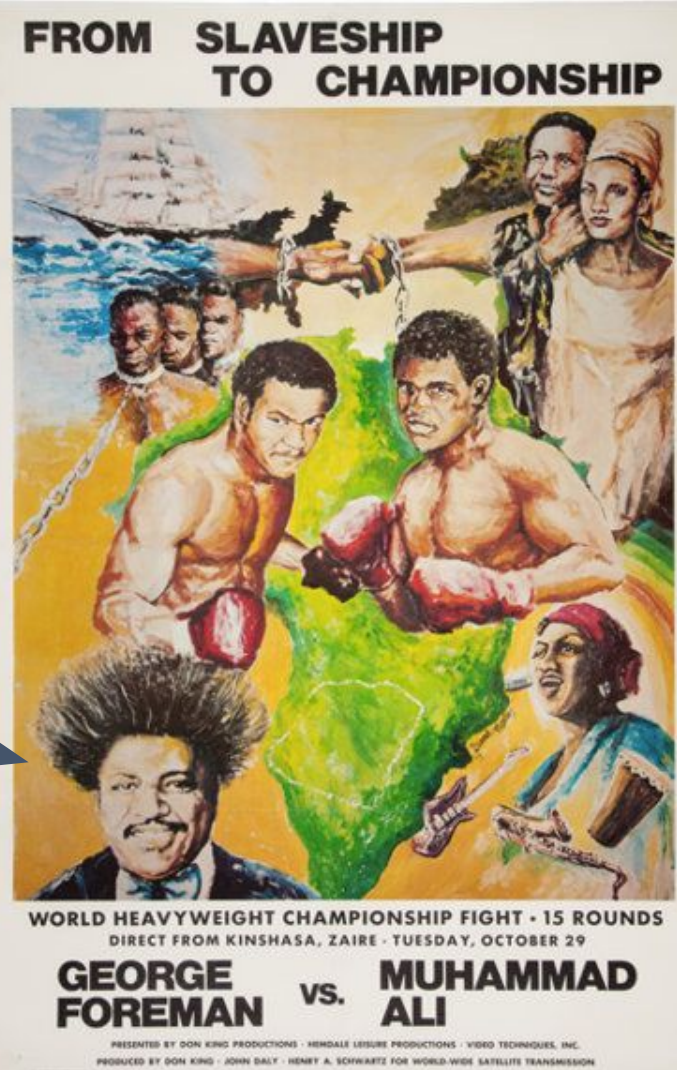


Ali's trademark confidence and rhyming scheme comes through in a pre-fight press conference...



The Rumble in the Jungle

- The fight was set up by promoter Don King in Zaire, Africa.
- Billed as a triumph of Black Power, enlisted BB King, Sister Sledge and James Brown to perform with the fight as the marquee event.
- \$10 million purse = largest in history



The Rumble in the Jungle & the “Rope-a-dope”

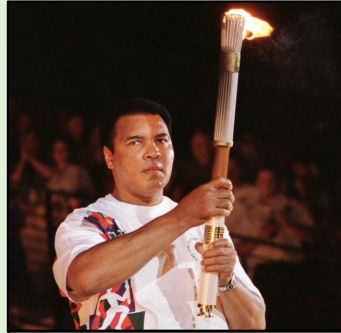
- In the early rounds, Ali let Foreman pummel him, whispering “that all you got George?” By round 8, Foreman was exhausted and Ali had him where he wanted him. Then Ali moved in and stopped Foreman with a knockout.
- Legend restored - 10 years after his first heavyweight title.



- In 1971, the Supreme Court granted Ali conscientious objector status, reversing Ali's prior conviction.
- In 1984, at age 42 (three years into retirement), Ali revealed he had Parkinson's disease. The symptoms include tremors, a tightening of the muscles, and slowness of movement and speech.
- Ali remained a public figure until his death in 2016.



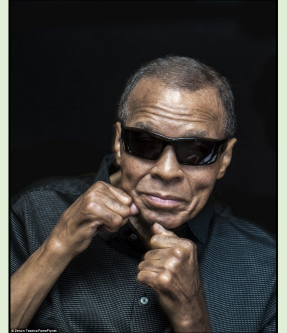
1990 Ali helped release 15 US hostages from Iraq after meeting with Saddam Hussein.



1996 he lit the flame at the Atlanta Olympics.



2005 Pres. GW Bush awarded Ali the Medal of Freedom.



Cultural Heroes & Icons Project

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.**

Iconic
"A person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration."
"very famous or popular, especially being considered to represent particular opinions or a particular time"

Hero
[hē-rō] noun
Someone admired for their courage, achievements, noble sacrifices, & ability to stare adversity in the face without a single blink.

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)
- Jane Fonda (actress, fitness personality)