

Muhammad Ali

I. Early Years

A. Born as _____ in 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky.

B. Took up boxing at the age of 13.

C. Context: life in the South in the 1940s-1960s

1. At the time, much of America was still **segregated**.

a) DEFINE:



2. It was rare to find a public space where blacks and whites shared physical space and worked side-by-side as equals.

a) What made boxing different?

D. Clay won the light heavyweight gold medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome at the age of 18.

1. What did he do with his medal after returning home and being denied service in segregated Louisville? Why?

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. What made him a different kind of athlete?

A. _____

B. _____

IV. First Professional Fight (Feb. 1964)

A. Ali's first professional title fight was against Sonny Liston, the reigning heavyweight champ

B. The odds were stacked against Clay but he was still confident. Give ONE example of how he talked a big game before the fight:

V. Career Stats: Ali defended his heavyweight title 9 times from 1965-1967.

VI. **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. What did members of the **Nation of Islam** believe?

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

1. The media, many of his opponents and even his own parents refused to call him by his new name.

C. CONSIDER: How do you think white Americans felt about the Nation of Islam and Ali's beliefs??

b) How did his speaking tour help to change his public image?

VIII. Ali's Protest in Historical Context

A. America's racial politics changed a lot from 1964-1968. Many African-Americans were frustrated with the slow pace of change in America. This frustration can be seen through:

1. The **Black Power Movement** (DEFINE): _____

(African-American athletes at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City in 1968 had raised their hands in a black power salute on the medals stand.)

2. The James Brown song "Say it Loud, Say it Proud" - what is the message of the song?

3. How is what Ali's saying, similar to the way a lot of black Americans were feeling at that time?

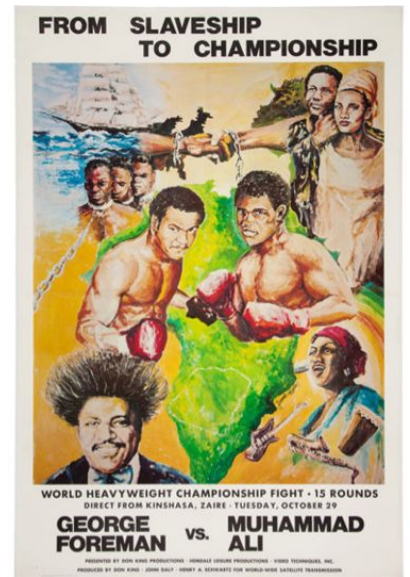
IX. Ali v. Frazier (1970)

- A. Ali was allowed to return to the ring in 1970.
- B. In his third fight back in the ring, he fought Joe Frazier in Madison Square Garden.

- 1. Who won? _____
- 2. What was important about this fight? _____

X. Ali v. Foreman (1975) - the “Rumble in the Jungle”

- A. Why was this fight marketed as a celebration of Black Power?



- XI. In 1971, the Supreme Court granted Ali conscientious objector status, reversing Ali’s prior conviction.

XII. Life after sports:

- A. In 1984, at age 42, Ali revealed he had Parkinson’s disease. (The symptoms include tremors, tightening muscles, and slowness of movement & speech.)
- B. In 2005, President George W. Bush awarded Ali the Medal of Freedom.

- XIII. Ali remained a public figure until his death in 2016.

REFLECTION QUESTION: How was Ali an example of staying true to one’s belief in spite of personal consequences?