

# Muhammad Ali

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Adapted from: <http://www.biography.com/people/muhammad-ali-9181165>

## Muhammad Ali (1942 – 2016)

*Boxing's most celebrated athlete, heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali was also known for his public stance against the Vietnam War and his lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease.*

### Synopsis



Born Cassius Clay in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1942, Muhammad Ali became an Olympic gold medalist in 1960 and the world heavyweight boxing champion in 1964. Following his suspension for refusing military service, Ali reclaimed the heavyweight title two more times during the 1970s, winning famed bouts against Joe Frazier and George Foreman along the way. Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1984, Ali devoted much of his time to philanthropy, earning the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005. He died on June 3, 2016, in Phoenix, Arizona.

### Early Life

Boxer, philanthropist and social activist Muhammad Ali was born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. on January 17, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky. Ali showed at an early age that he wasn't afraid of any one – inside or outside of the ring.

At the age of 12, Ali discovered his talent for boxing. His bike was stolen, and Ali told a police officer, Joe Martin, that he wanted to beat up the thief. "Well, you better learn how to fight before you start challenging people," Martin told him. In addition to being a police officer, Martin also trained young boxers at a local gym.



In his first amateur bout in 1954, Ali won the fight by split decision. He went on to win the 1956 Golden Gloves tournament for novices in the light heavyweight class. Three years later, he won the National Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions, and the Amateur Athletic Union's national title for light heavyweights.

### Olympic Gold

In 1960, Ali won a spot on the U.S. Olympic boxing team, and travelled to Rome, Italy, to compete. He was well known for his lightning speed and fancy footwork. Ali defeated Zbigniew Pietrzkowski from Poland to win the light heavyweight gold medal.

After his Olympic victory, Ali became an American hero. He soon turned professional, and continued to overwhelm all his opponents. Ali took out British heavyweight champion Henry Cooper in 1963, and then knocked out Sonny Liston in 1964 to become the heavyweight champion of the world.

Often referring to himself as "The greatest," Ali was not afraid to sing his own praises. In one of his famously quoted descriptions, Ali told reporters that he could "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" in the boxing ring.

### Conversion to Islam and Suspension

In 1964, Ali decided to join the black Muslim group the Nation of Islam. At first, he called himself "Cassius X" before settling on the name Muhammad Ali. (He eventually converted to orthodox Islam during the 1970s.)

# Muhammad Ali

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Adapted from: <http://www.biography.com/people/muhammad-ali-9181165>

Ali spoke out against the Vietnam War. Drafted into the military in April 1967, he refused to serve. He said his religious beliefs prevented him from fighting. He was arrested, and then stripped of his world title and boxing licence. Ali was sentenced to five years in prison in June 1967 but remained free whilst he appealed his conviction. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually overturned the conviction in June 1971.

## Boxing Comeback

In 1971, Ali took on Joe Frazier in what has been called the "Fight of the Century". Frazier and Ali went toe-to-toe for 14 rounds before Frazier dropped Ali with a vicious left hook in the 15th. Ali recovered quickly, but the decision went to Frazier and Ali had his first professional loss after 31 wins. Ali soon suffered a second loss, to Ken Norton, but he beat Frazier in a 1974 rematch. After losing his title to Leon Spinks in February 1978, Ali defeated him in a September rematch, becoming the first boxer to win the heavyweight championship three times. Following one final loss in 1981, to Trevor Berbick, the boxing great retired from the sport.

## Philanthropy and Diagnosis of Parkinson's



In his retirement, Ali devoted much of his time to philanthropy. He announced that he had Parkinson's disease in 1984, and was involved in raising funds for the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center in Phoenix, Arizona. Over the years, Ali also supported the Special Olympics and the Make-A-Wish Foundation, among other organisations. In 1996, he lit the Olympic cauldron at the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, an emotional moment in sports history.

Ali travelled to numerous countries, including Mexico and Morocco, to help those in need. In 1998, he was chosen to be a United Nations Messenger of Peace because of his work in developing nations.

In 2005, Ali received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush. He also opened the Muhammad Ali Center in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, that same year. "I am an ordinary man who worked hard to develop the talent I was given," he said. "Many fans wanted to build a museum to acknowledge my achievements. I wanted more than a building to house my memorabilia. I wanted a place that would inspire people to be the best that they could be at whatever they chose to do, and to encourage them to be respectful of one another."

Despite the progression of Parkinson's and the onset of stenosis, a painful condition affecting the spine, Ali remained active in public life. He was on hand to celebrate the inauguration of the first African-American president in January 2009, when Barack Obama was sworn into office. Soon after the inauguration, Ali received the President's Award from the NAACP for his public service efforts.

## Death and Legacy

In early 2015, Ali was hospitalised for a severe urinary tract infection after having battled pneumonia. He was hospitalised again in early June 2016 for what was reportedly a respiratory issue. The revered athlete passed away on the evening of June 3, 2016, at a Phoenix, Arizona facility.

Ali is survived by his fourth wife, Yolanda, whom he had been married to since 1986. The couple had one son, Asaad. Ali had several children from previous relationships, including daughter Laila Ali, who followed in his footsteps by becoming a champion boxer.

Universally regarded as one of the greatest boxers in history, Ali's stature as a legend continued to grow even as his physical state diminished. He continues to be celebrated not only for his remarkable athletic skills but for his courage and willingness to speak his mind.

# Muhammad Ali

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Adapted from: <http://www.biography.com/people/muhammad-ali-9181165>

Answer these questions using **full sentences**:

1. In what year was Muhammad Ali born?

---

2. What was his birth name?

---

3. When did he become World Champion for the first time?

---

4. Which medal did he win at the Olympics?

---

5. How old was Muhammad Ali when he started boxing?

---

6. Which British boxer did Muhammad Ali beat?

---

7. Why was he sentenced to five years in prison?

---

8. How many years did he actually serve?

---

9. When did he beat Joe Frazier?

---

10. What did Muhammad Ali do after his loss to Trevor Berbick?

---

# Muhammad Ali

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Adapted from: <http://www.biography.com/people/muhammad-ali-9181165>

11. What does 'philanthropy' mean?

---

12. What medical condition did Muhammad Ali suffer from since at least 1984?

---

12. What award did he win from the NAACP in 2009?

---

13. Write down five FACTS about Muhammad Ali

---

---

---

14. What UN role was Muhammad Ali given in 1998?

---

16. What did Muhammad Ali become the first boxer to do?

---

17. How many times was he married?

---

18. Where were the Summer Olympics held in 1996?

---

19. What does his daughter, Laila Ali do?

---

20. Which group did Muhammad Ali join in 1964?

---

### Functional Skills L1 English mapping

Coverage and range statements provide an indication of the type of content candidates are expected to apply in functional contexts. Relevant content can also be drawn from equivalent (school) National Curriculum levels and the Adult Literacy standards.

✓ indicates the main coverage and range skills that are (or can be) covered in this resource. However, these will vary with the student group and how the resource is used by the teacher. **Reference:** Ofqual (2009), *Functional Skills criteria for English: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, level 1 and level 2*. <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/>

#### Level 1 Reading

**Skill standard (SS):** Read and understand a range of straightforward texts

#### Coverage and range statements

- a) Identify the main points and ideas, and how they are presented in a variety of texts
- b) Read and understand texts in detail ✓ 1-10, 12-13, 15-20
- c) Utilise information contained in texts ✓ 11, 14
- d) Identify suitable responses to texts

#### Level 1 Writing

**(SS):** Write a range of texts to communicate information, ideas and opinions, using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience

- a) Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail
- b) Present information in a logical sequence
- c) Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience
- d) Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense
- e) Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation / spelling & that meaning is clear

#### Level 1 Speaking, Listening

**(SS):** Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects

#### and Communication

- a) Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input
- b) Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions
- c) Make different kinds of contributions to discussions
- f) Present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language

\* This resource also covers many adult literacy curriculum <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1286> elements.

### Answers

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. 1942   | 11. To provide generous donations of money to good causes/give to charity/help people less fortunate/ etc |
| 2. Cassius (Marcellus) Clay                                       | 12. Parkinson's Disease   |
| 3. 1964   | 13. The President's Award   |
| 4. Gold   | 14. Any 5 correct facts (not opinions)  |
| 5. 121  | 15. United Nations Messenger of Peace   |
| 6. Henry Cooper   | 16. Win the heavyweight championship three times  |
| 7. For refusing to serve in the military/fight in the Vietnam war | 17. Four  |
| 8. None – he remained free whilst appealing his conviction.       | 18. Atlanta   |
| 9. 1974   | 19. She is a champion boxer   |
| 10. He retired  | 20. Nation of Islam   |