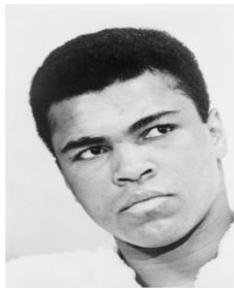


I'm the Greatest: Muhammad Ali



Picture 1: Young Ali

The greatest boxing champion of all times, was born as *Cassius Marcellus Clay* on January 17th, 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky, but changed his name to Muhammad Ali after converting to Islam. But defining Ali only a boxer would simply be ridiculous: he was a symbol, a hero and an outstanding figure in the history of human rights.

A symbol for youths

Ali was three times World Heavyweight Champion and the winner of an Olympic gold medal, which he threw into the Ohio River after being refused service at a "whites-only" restaurant.

In 1966, Ali refused to serve in the United States Army during the Vietnam War as a conscientious objector, pronouncing the famous words: "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong ... They never called me *nigger*."

As a result, his boxing license was retired and he was stripped of the title. Ali was then sent to prison to serve time, but he kept on training himself and he regained his title on October 30th, 1974 by defeating champion George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire.

Retirement

In 1978 Ali retired from professional boxing and in 1984 he discovered he had Parkinson's disease. During the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta he had the honor of lighting the flame to start the games. All the world shivered in seeing "The Greatest" trembling under Parkinson's disease.

On November 17th, 2002, Muhammad Ali went to Afghanistan as "U.N. Messenger of Peace" for a three-day goodwill mission as a special guest of the United Nations.

Now answer these questions:

- 1) What do Muhammad Ali and Cassius Clay have in common?
- 2) Was Ali just a famous boxer? Explain.
- 3) Why was he refused food in a restaurant?
- 4) What did he do next?
- 5) What did Ali think of the Vietnam War?
- 6) Why did he have to serve time?
- 7) Who was George Foreman?
- 8) What happened in 1974 in Africa?
- 9) Who is a conscientious objector? Explain.
- 10) Why, in your opinion, Ali was chosen to light up the Olympics flame in Atlanta?