

DISCUSSION & ENGAGEMENT GUIDE



**BIGGER THAN BOXING.
LARGER THAN LIFE.**

**MUHAMMAD
ALI**

**A FILM BY KEN BURNS
SARAH BURNS & DAVID McMAHON**

#MuhammadAliPBS pbs.org/Ali

The goal of this guide is to help you create meaningful events and facilitate conversations around *Muhammad Ali*. WETA is pleased to provide support and resources as well as tips and best practices to all public media stations and community organizations. We hope that this guide prepares you to spark deep conversations, share stories and connect with your community.



Cassius Clay in his Olympic blazer, circa 1960.

Credit: Gean A. Baron, Louisville Courier Journal via USA Today Network

ABOUT THE SERIES

DESCRIPTION

Muhammad Ali is a four-part, eight-hour limited series directed by Ken Burns and written and co-directed by Sarah Burns and David McMahon, whose previous collaborations with Burns include *The Central Park Five* (2012), *Jackie Robinson* (2016) and *East Lake Meadows: A Public Housing Story* (2020). The film brings to life one of the best-known and most indelible figures of the 20th Century, a three-time heavyweight boxing champion who captivated millions of fans with his mesmerizing combination of speed, grace, and power in the ring, and charm and playful boasting outside of it. Ali insisted on being himself unconditionally and became a global icon and inspiration to people everywhere.

AIRDATES (check local listings)

- **Sunday, September 19, 8/7c:** Round One: The Greatest (1942–1964)
- **Monday, September 20, 8/7c:** Round Two: What's My Name? (1964–1970)
- **Tuesday, September 21, 8/7c:** Round Three: The Rivalry (1970–1974)
- **Wednesday, September 22, 8/7c:** Round Four: The Spell Remains (1974–2016)

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- pbs.org/ali
- #MuhammadAliPBS

STREAMING

Beyond the broadcast of *Muhammad Ali*, the full film will be available for free streaming (for a limited time) at pbs.org/ali and via the PBS Video App as well as local station video portals.

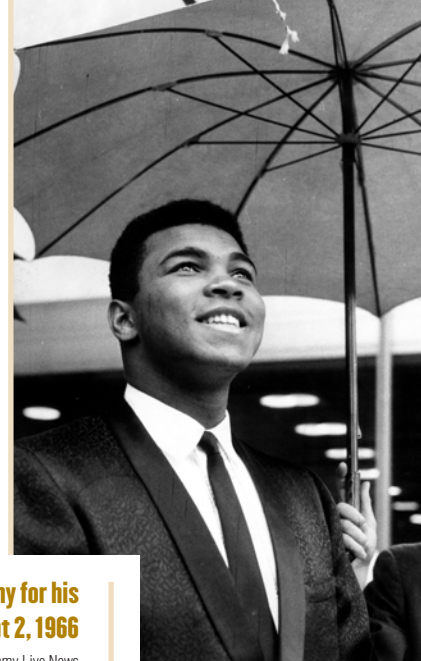
Free video on demand (FVOD) streaming of all four episodes begins September 19th with the broadcast of Episode 1. FVOD will last for three weeks (9/19/21–10/9/21). After the FVOD end date, the full film will be available in PBS Passport through the end of term in 2028. PBS Passport rights extend to Canada.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Muhammad Ali is a production of Florentine Films and WETA Washington, D.C. Directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Burns and David McMahon. Written by David McMahon & Sarah Burns. Produced by Sarah Burns, David McMahon, Stephanie Jenkins and Ken Burns. Edited by K.A. Miille, Woody Richman, Ted Raviv and Aljeron Tunsil. Co-Producer Tim McAleer. Associate Producer Joe Siegal. Cinematography by Buddy Squires. Narrated by Keith David. Original Music by Jahlil Beats. Assistant Editor Samali Bikangaga. Production Coordinator Akia Thorpe. Apprentice Editors Gabrielle Berbey, Franny Bernstein and Shyala Jayasinghe. Executive Produced by Ken Burns. The executive in charge for WETA is John F. Wilson.

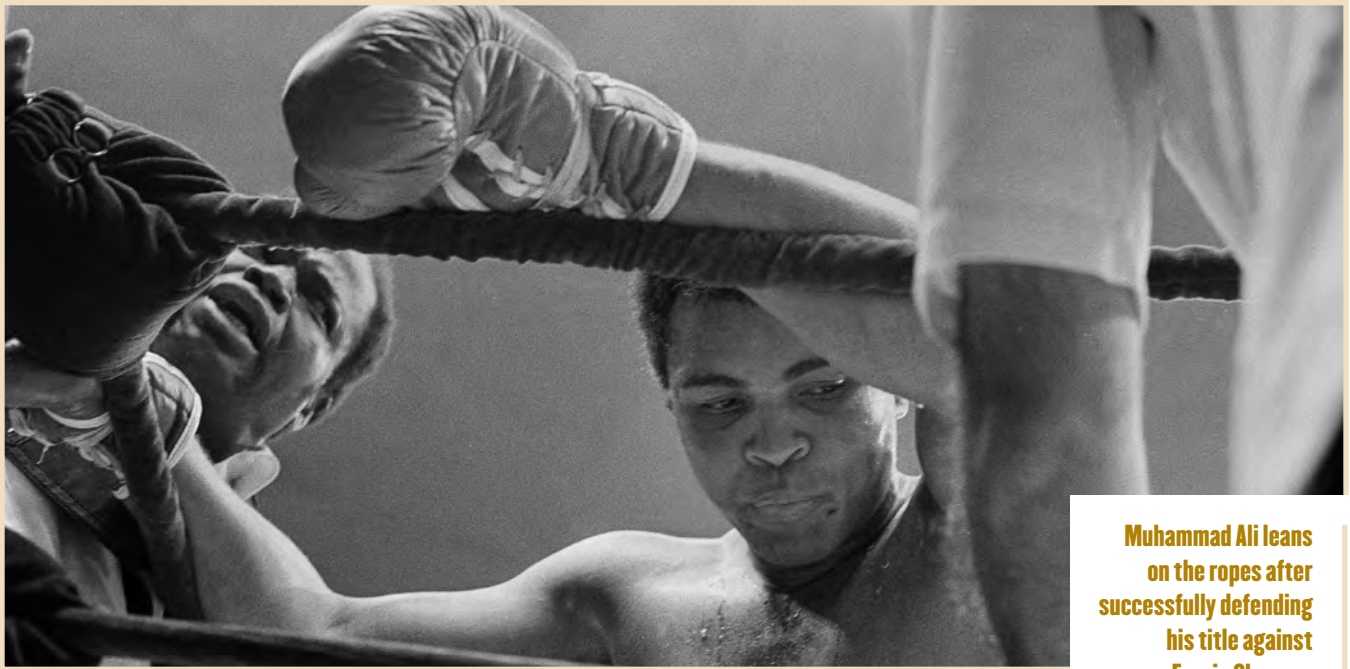
FUNDING CREDITS

Corporate funding for *Muhammad Ali* was provided by Bank of America. Major funding was provided by David M. Rubenstein. Major funding was also provided by The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and by The Better Angels Society and by its members Alan and Marcia Docter; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Tudor Jones; The Fullerton Family Charitable Fund; Gilchrist and Amy Berg; The Brooke Brown Barzun Philanthropic Foundation, The Owsley Brown III Philanthropic Foundation and The Augusta Brown Holland Philanthropic Foundation; Perry and Donna Golkin; John and Leslie McQuown; John and Catherine Debs; Fred and Donna Seigel; Susan and John Wieland; Stuart and Joanna Brown; Diane and Hal Brierley; Fiddlehead Fund; Rocco and Debby Landesman; McCloskey Family Charitable Trust; Maureen Jane and Mark Perry; and Donna and Richard Strong. And by viewers like you.



Muhammad Ali in Frankfurt, Germany for his title fight with Karl Mildenerger. Sept 2, 1966

Credit: ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Live News



Muhammad Ali leans on the ropes after successfully defending his title against Earnie Shavers. Madison Square Garden, New York. September 29, 1977.

Credit: Marty Lederhandler/
AP Images

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

KEN BURNS / Director, Producer

Ken Burns has been making documentary films for over forty years. Since the Academy Award nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Ken has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *The Civil War*; *Baseball*; *Jazz*; *The War*; *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*; *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*; *Jackie Robinson*; *The Vietnam War*; *Country Music*, and *Hemingway*.

SARAH BURNS / Writer, Director, Producer

Sarah Burns is the author of *The Central Park Five: A Chronicle of a City Wilding* (Knopf, 2011) and, along with David McMahon and Ken Burns, the producer, writer and director of the documentaries *The Central Park Five*, *Jackie Robinson*, and *East Lake Meadows: A Public Housing Story*.

DAVID McMAHON / Writer, Director, Producer

David McMahon has been making award-winning documentary films for more than a decade. With Ken Burns and Sarah Burns, he wrote, directed and produced *The Central Park Five*, *Jackie Robinson*, and *East Lake Meadows: A Public Housing Story*.

ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS

Community partners play a vital role in strengthening outreach and engagement efforts and can make your initiatives more meaningful and impactful. Get your partners to the table early and empower them as experts to inform your work, connect with their constituency, and support and promote your community events.

Work with partners to:

- Provide advice and guidance on your station's plans and engagement activities.
- Have partners host or contribute to community screening events and discussions.
- Serve as local experts on panels or suggest representatives to participate in a panel discussion about issues brought up in the screener or film.
- Provide content and support social media efforts.

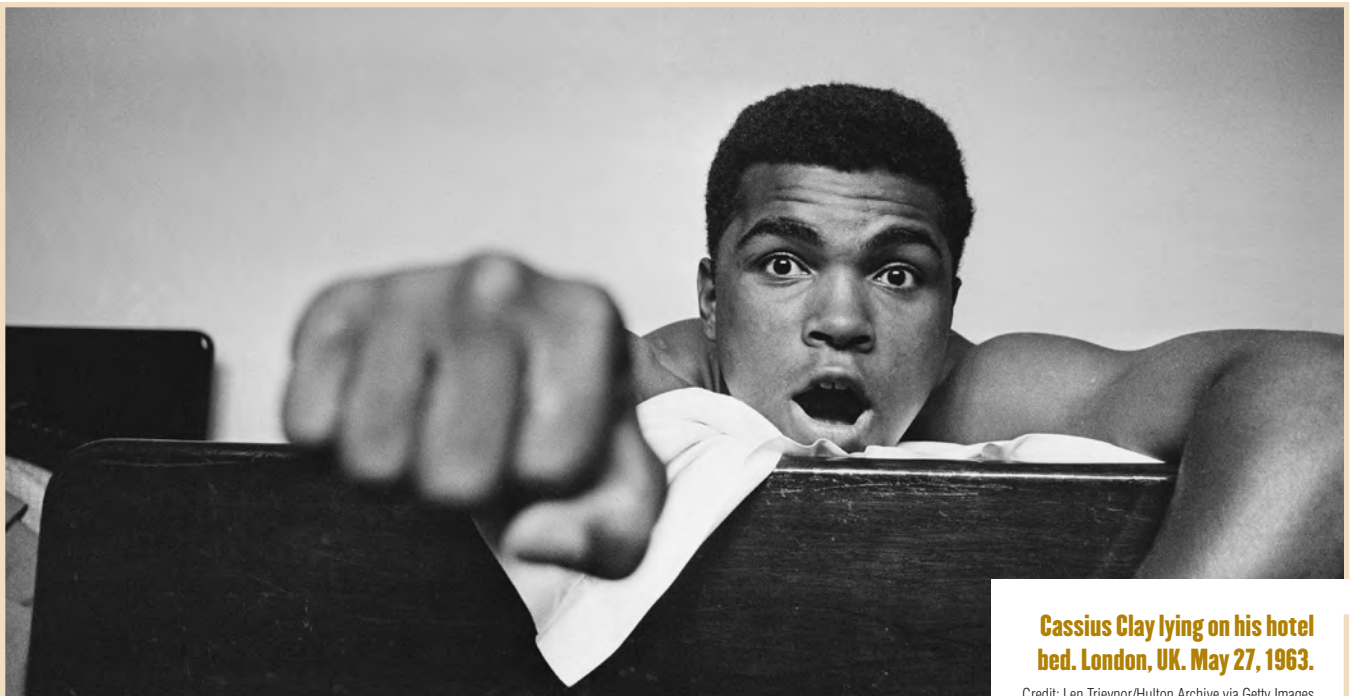


Muhammad Ali provides an opportunity for stations to reach across their community and engage audiences beyond traditional broadcast. January 17, 2022 will mark what would have been Muhammad Ali's 80th birthday. In honor of that, the engagement window will go through January 28, 2022 to allow stations to develop long-tail engagement plans.

The film creates space for communities to have intergenerational conversations about issues that made headlines during Ali's lifetime and that are still making headlines today: the intersection of sports and politics; racial justice; racism and islamophobia; civic engagement and youth involvement in social movements; athletes and philanthropy; and storytelling as a unifying force that also inspires deep reflection and connection. You may find valuable partners by reaching out to local Islamic centers, schools, humanities councils, writing clubs, museums, art organizations, colleges and universities. WETA has forged partnerships with organizations that have national reach to support station outreach and local engagement. Deep and diverse partnerships allow stations to develop a creative approach to engagement that takes diversity, equity, and inclusion into consideration when planning events.

Additional Community Support

Bank of America is the exclusive corporate funder of *Muhammad Ali*. Stations may partner with any organization for community engagement activities, including the participation of experts or panelists at a screening event, but should not seek or accept on-air sponsorship, funding, or underwriting for *Muhammad Ali* from any personal banking, lending, and other financial institutions, including credit cards.



Cassius Clay lying on his hotel bed. London, UK. May 27, 1963.

Credit: Len Trievnor/Hulton Archive via Getty Images

HOW TO SET UP A SCREENING

REACH OUT TO PARTNERS

For a virtual screening event, partners may:

- Serve as, or provide access to, local experts for a panel discussion.
- Provide opportunities to host the event.
- Help you reach new audiences and share information to their networks.
- Create new avenues for engagement.

RECRUIT THE RIGHT FACILITATOR

Recruit a host or moderator that can facilitate an interesting and respectful discussion along with your screening, drawing out answers that are suitable for the laypeople in your audience. A good host or moderator should plan on previewing the screener in advance to prepare. Local reporters and journalists are often good moderators; they are experts at interviewing diverse subjects, connecting with audiences, and keeping conversations focused and on track.

SELECT PANELISTS

Recruit subject matter experts and invite them to participate as panelists at your screening event. Be mindful of your audience and make sure to have speakers that are able to connect with your audience in a meaningful way. Make sure your panelists and moderator are reflective of the diversity in your community.

CHOOSE YOUR VIRTUAL PLATFORM

WETA is here to support stations hosting virtual or hybrid events and recognizes each community is unique. Due to increasing concerns around COVID-19 variants, WETA strongly advises stations planning any in-person engagement components to consider adjusting their plans to an all-virtual format. At a minimum we request any in-person events have virtual contingency plans. The WETA Impact & Engagement team is here to assist stations navigating these unprecedented circumstances that pose serious challenges to in-person gatherings.

The engagement reel and individual clips can be featured in virtual events on social platforms. The one exception is the clip of Ali lighting the torch at the 1996 Olympic opening ceremonies in Atlanta. There are strict permissions around this clip. Only social channels/platforms owned or controlled by PBS/PBS member stations have the rights to stream this clip. Organizations interested in hosting virtual events on their own social platforms should use Version 1 of the screening reel.

Keep in the loop with community engagement across the country!



Share your station's engagement activities (and RSVP links for virtual events) with other stations, and the WETA team and film producers, by adding details to this shared station activity tracking document:

https://bit.ly/ALI_StationActivityTracker

TIPS FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS

- **Try to schedule a run-through** to test the virtual platform and make sure that everyone participating has good lighting, are aware of their on-screen background, clear audio and are all on the same page!
- **Incorporate a pre/post slideshow** with music at the beginning/end of your event to engage your audience and share additional information related to your event.
- **Be creative!** Experiment with using polls or post questions in the chat to engage your audience.
- **Have a call to action.** Promote related events/activities, like the [Red Bike Moment](#)[®], after your event to keep the conversation going!
- **Link to the [attendee survey](#)** in the chat or include in your message to attendees after the event. WETA will share all survey results back with the associated station.



SCREENING REEL

Below is an outline of selected clips that make up each version of the screening reel. Stations also have access to the individual screening clips to weave throughout their event.

Reel 1: How Ali's Beliefs Shaped Who He Was [TRT: 25:01]

- **Intro (full)** [7:45]
Series introduction, visual montage of Ali's career as well as post-boxing life.
- **Bike-Boxing Discovery** [3:02]
Twelve year-old Cassius Clay gets his bike stolen and discovers his love for boxing.
- **Cleveland Williams Fight** [2:37]
Ali fights against Cleveland Williams in 1966 at the Astrodome in Houston, TX.
- **Mechanical Memory** [3:05]
Ali is found guilty of refusing the draft, but is prepared to go to jail, or even die, for his beliefs.
- **Conviction Reversed** [2:48]
Ali reacts to the U.S. Supreme Court reversing his conviction for draft evasion. Walter Mosley talks about the influence Ali had on his own anti-war sentiment.
- **Devotion to Islam** [2:40]
As he gets older, Ali devotes himself to Islam.
- **Couldn't Be Undone** [4:44]
Talking heads discuss Ali's evolution into a person "bigger than boxing."

Reel 2: Ali's Evolution—Career, Religion, Parkinson's, Status As A Hero-Like Figure [TRT: 28:34]

- **Intro (full)** [7:45]
Series introduction, visual montage of Ali's career as well as post-boxing life.
- **Bike-Boxing Discovery** [3:02]
Twelve year-old Cassius Clay gets his bike stolen and discovers his love for boxing.
- **'64 Africa Trip** [3:27]
Ali goes on a month-long tour of African countries after winning the heavyweight title in 1964.
- **"America is My Birth Country"** [5:19]
Ali is reclassified and is now eligible for the draft. The negative press creates obstacles in scheduling fights within the United States.
- **Frazier II** [5:56]
Ali and Joe Frazier face off for the second time in 1974.
- **1996 Olympics*** [4:22]
Ali makes a surprise appearance at the 1996 Olympics opening ceremony.

**Only social channels/platforms owned or controlled by PBS/PBS member stations have the rights to stream this clip.*

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

- **Preview the clips** that will be presented at your screening event. Think about your audience and the panelists to develop questions that you can pose for a respectful conversation.
- **Review some of our suggested questions** in this guide for ideas on how to spark a conversation. Include questions that help localize the discussion.
- **You don't have to be an expert!** Do listen with respect to panelists and keep an open mind, while respecting the time for everyone to speak.
- **At the event, be clear about your role** as the facilitator: to keep the discussion moving and asking questions that promote discussion.
- **Inquire about proper names and phonetic pronunciation** for guest panelists and/or community partners prior to the screening. If you need clarification, ask the guest directly, or search for video(s) in which the guest introduced themselves to listen to proper pronunciation.

POST-EVENT

- With virtual events, leverage the power of the platform and share opportunities for audience members to continue the conversation. What other engagement activities could you direct your audience towards? Consider adding cards to the end of your virtual event that encourage members to share their *Red Bike Moment*® and to complete the [attendee survey](#).
- In lieu of tabling that occurs at in-person events, you may share information about local partner events in follow-up emails with attendees, or invite community leaders to share recordings of their *Red Bike Moment*® and how it relates to their organization's mission or work.



Malcolm X and family pose for a photo with Cassius Clay on a trip to Miami, Florida. January 1964.

Credit: Robert Haggins



Muhammad Ali enjoying a spontaneous encounter with his fans in Detroit, Michigan. Circa 1977.

Credit: Michael Gaffney

NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

NATIONAL CONVERSATION SERIES WITH THE FILMMAKERS

In collaboration with ESPN's "The Undeclared," PBS will host a series of four virtual conversations with Ken Burns and leading experts and scholars. Each discussion will cover a specific aspect of Muhammad Ali's life and legacy in the context of race in America today. [Co-brandable invitation artwork](#) is available in the project Dropbox for local stations to invite their members to each event.

- **Wednesday, June 23:** "Ali the Man"
- **Monday, July 19:** "Ali on the World's Stage"
- **Thursday, September 9:** "Ali, Race & Religion"
- **Tuesday, September 14:** "Ali, Activism & The Modern Athlete"

The *Conversations on Muhammad Ali* series will be archived at pbs.org/alievents and recordings are available for streaming after each live event. Stations may engage community members and partners by planning watch parties around each live event or recording.

RED BIKE MOMENT[®]

All of us have memories to reflect upon which reveal insights into how we became who we are today. The Ali Center's *Red Bike Moment*[®] seeks to celebrate Ali's legacy by capturing these stories. The Ali Center and WETA are partnering to create a national story collection initiative to invite members of the public (especially students) to share :30 stories of influential moments in their life. An engagement toolkit for the *Red Bike Moment*[®] will be available for stations to share with partner organizations like youth organizations, public libraries, sports associations, spoken words organizations, and other groups.

What Is a Red Bike Moment[®]?

A *Red Bike Moment*[®] is a transformational event in your life that occurred because of a challenge or overcoming some type of adversity.

When Muhammad Ali—then Cassius Clay—was twelve years old, his new red Schwinn bicycle was stolen. Clay, in tears, found a policeman to report the crime to and stated that he wanted to “whup” the thief who stole his bike. Serendipitously, the policeman was Sergeant Joe Martin, who trained boxers. He encouraged Clay to return to the gym and learn how to box before looking for retaliation. Cassius Clay's stolen bike was a pivotal moment in his life because it led to boxing; it became his “Red Bike” Moment.

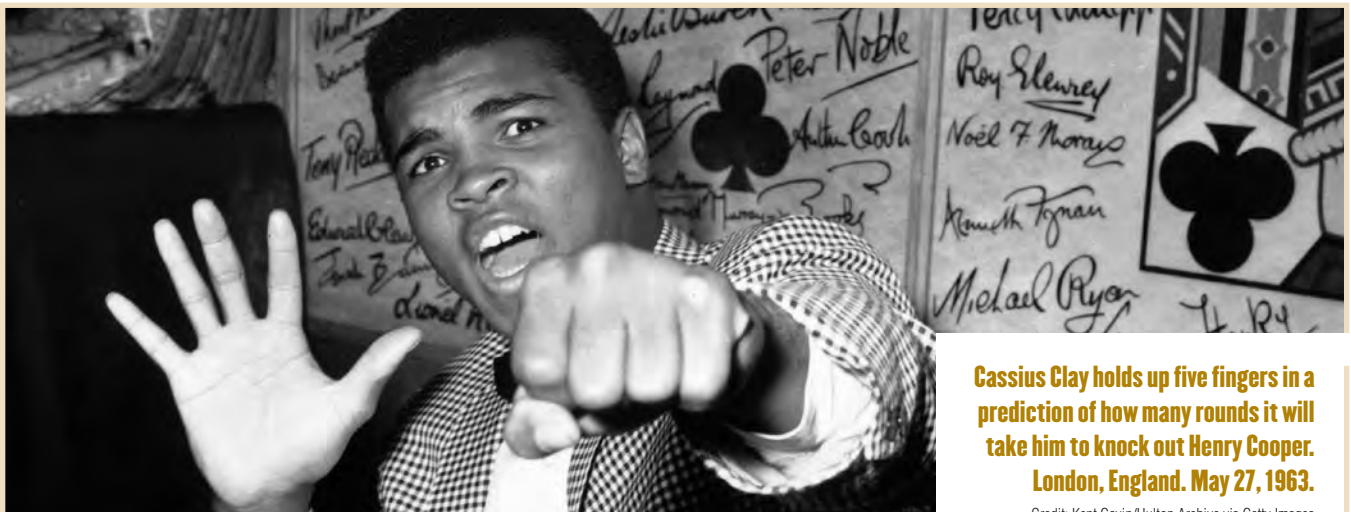


RED BIKE MOMENT™
MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER

How to Share

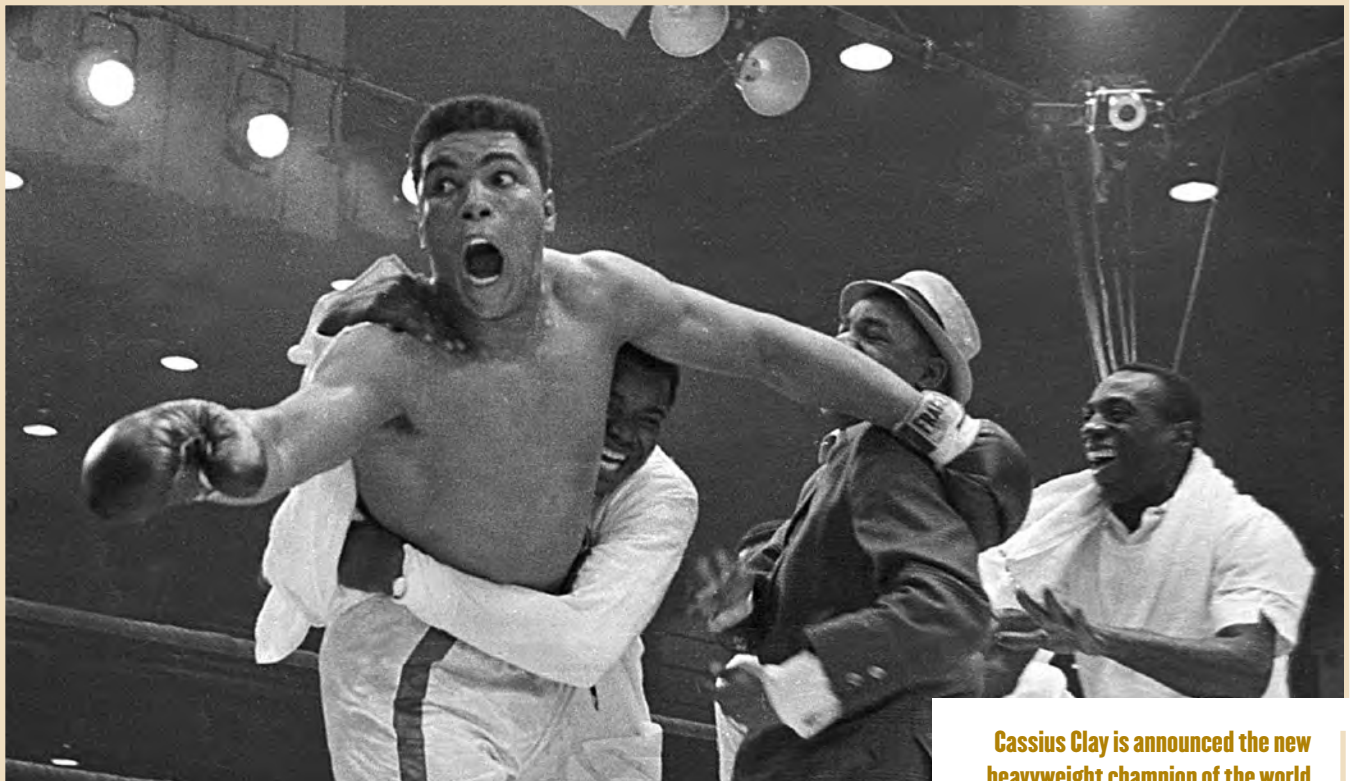
Harnessing the power of social media and storytelling, individuals can share their *Red Bike Moment*[®] by posting a video or photo on social media telling their story and by tagging the Muhammad Ali Center (#AliCenter) and the film (#MuhammadAliPBS) to share it with the world.

- Facebook: @MuhammadAliCenter
- Twitter: @AliCenter
- Instagram: AliCenterLou
- #AliCenter
- #MuhammadAliPBS



Cassius Clay holds up five fingers in a prediction of how many rounds it will take him to knock out Henry Cooper. London, England. May 27, 1963.

Credit: Kent Gavin/Hulton Archive via Getty Images



Cassius Clay is announced the new heavyweight champion of the world after knocking out Sonny Liston. Miami, Florida. February 25, 1965

Credit: AP Images

BOOKS

WETA is partnering with PBS Books' Library Engagement Program, a national initiative dedicated to build and enhance working relationships between libraries and their local PBS stations. PBS Books helps to amplify local station content to its library partners and beyond. WETA will help stations connect with public libraries to use *Muhammad Ali* as a vehicle for community engagement.

PBS Books is connected to more than 1,800 libraries nationwide and will support efforts for stations and community organizations to host events around the film. Consider partnering with local libraries to create community outreach programs. Libraries are great partners to share information about screening and discussion events, writing or art competitions, story collecting initiatives, and educational resources. PBS Books has created themed reading lists (one for adults, and one for children) that are highlighted on the following pages. PDF copies of each list are available for download in the partner toolkit (http://bit.ly/ALI_PartnerToolkit).

For questions about partnering with PBS Books, or the reading lists, please contact Heather Montilla at hmontilla@pbsbooks.org.



Celebrate the release of *Muhammad Ali* by sharing stories of the legendary boxer with your children.

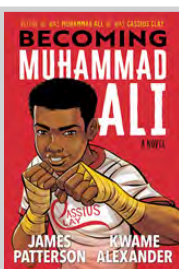
With heroic feats, and a larger-than-life spirit, Ali forever remains an American icon. These books, for young readers of a variety of ages, can invite your little ones to dream big, work hard for what they believe in, and achieve greatness in many shapes and sizes.

Becoming Muhammad Ali

James Patterson, Kwame Alexander & Dawud Anyabwile

AGES 8-12

Legendary authors and writers collaborate on this recent hit—a biographical novel of Muhammad Ali, up until his seventeenth year. Readers join him as Cassius Clay, learning more about his childhood experiences that shaped his later feats. With a poetic approach to writing, Ali’s already famous story comes alive with a new rhythm.

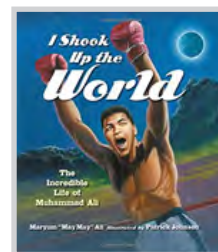


I Shook Up the World

Maryum “Maymay” Ali

AGES 6-10

Written from a deeply personal and proud place, this book by Muhammad Ali’s daughter is a stunning tribute. She applauds a man who was a champion, an ambassador, and, for her, first and foremost a father. Written with “Rounds” in place of chapters, Ali places family in the foreground and illustrates how Cassius grew from his parent’s own words of advice.

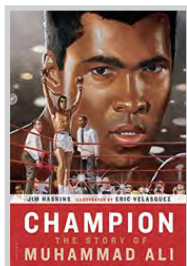


Champion: The Story of Muhammad Ali

Jim Haskins & Eric Velasquez

AGES 6-10

This book soars with brightly colored illustrations and impressive attention to detail. A life mission sparked by a stolen bike at the age of twelve, Ali’s athletic prowess was cultivated from a young age. Join the authors as they describe how Ali overcame challenges of athleticism, as well as civil and religious liberties, at every age and stage.

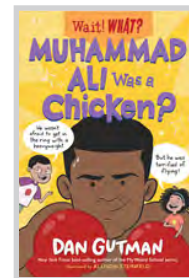


Muhammad Ali Was a Chicken? (Wait! What?)

Dan Gutman & Allison Steinfeld

AGES 6-8

Follow along with Gutman and Steinfeld, and their characters of Paige and Turner: two siblings who want to have important questions asked and answered. With their focus on inquisitive minds, the authors explore lesser known facts about Ali and the quirks and experiences that made him, simply, him!

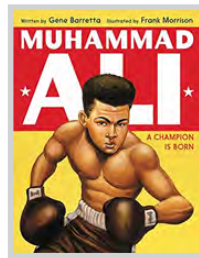


Suggested Muhammad Ali Reading List for Children, continued

Muhammad Ali: A Champion is Born Gene Barretta & Frank Morrison

AGES 4-8

This book focuses on the central, red bike-stealing incident that made Cassius Clay fight for justice and honor in every capacity. A man who famously said, “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee,” Ali preserved a dual elegance and tenacity that will inspire young readers. They will soon learn that “he owed it all to a stolen bicycle.”

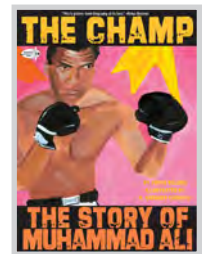


The Champ: The Story of Muhammad Ali

Tonya Bolden & R. Gregory Christie

AGES 6-9

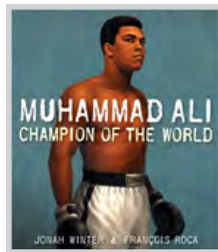
Have you learned about Ali's life through free verse? This book is the perfect opportunity to defy convention, reading in a beautifully creative form with equally striking paintings. This is a thrilling experience of an everlasting story. Ali's life still packs a punch on the page!



Muhammad Ali: Champion of the World Jonah Winter & Francois Roca

AGES 4-8

Winter and Roca tell the story of Ali's more than twenty-year-long boxing career. Selecting the most essential highlights, the two share how he climbed to greatness. A special addition are Roca's oil paintings, adding a distinct touch to make Winter's words, and Ali's broader personal history, come to life.

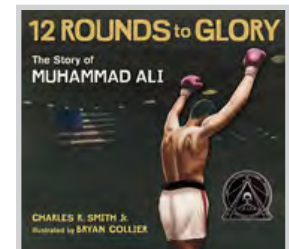


Twelve Rounds to Glory: The Story of Muhammad Ali

Charles R. Smith Jr
& Bryan Collier

AGES 10-12

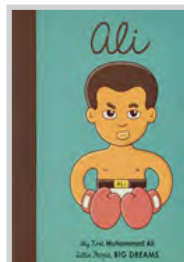
Smith wants to show his readers that there are many pathways to fulfilling their dreams. For this literary mission, Ali is the perfect example. The “rounds” build in intricate layers, each adding to this inspirational message.



Muhammad Ali: My First Muhammad Ali (Little People, BIG DREAMS, 22) Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara & Brosmind

AGES BABY-3

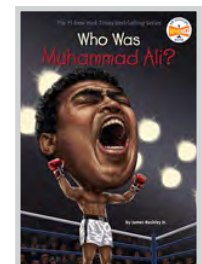
There is no minimum age to begin learning about Ali. No matter how young a reader (or listener) may be, they should learn about his incredible feats and unwavering commitments. Vegara and Brosmind use simple sentences and pictures while maintaining the essence of Ali.



Who was Muhammad Ali? James Buckley Jr, Who HQ & Stephen Marchesi

AGES 8-12

You may think you know Ali, or you might find yourself asking “how can I learn more?” For either, we can keep learning exactly “Who” he was: a fantastic multitude.





Discover through this collection of books how Muhammad Ali, otherwise known as “The Greatest,” rose to incredible fame.

These books will allow the reader to explore his widely celebrated achievements, as well as delve into an up-close personal history, guided by great authors.

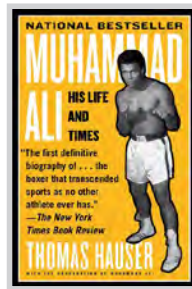
Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times

Thomas Hauser

Hauser captures the real Muhammad Ali through the words of those who knew him best.

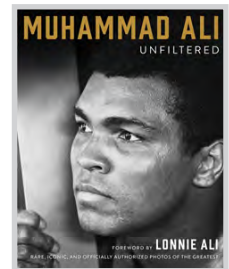
First-person accounts from more than 200 of Ali’s family members, opponents, friends, and world leaders provide a unique look at the man globally known as “The Greatest.”

This candid portrait reveals a man who was deeply religious, mercurial, generous, and a showman in and out of the ring.



Muhammad Ali Unfiltered: Rare, Iconic, and Officially Authorized Photos of the Greatest Muhammad Ali & Lonnie Ali

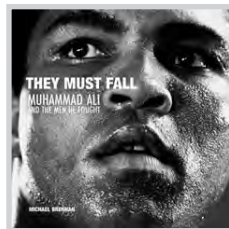
A striking visual narrative of Muhammad Ali’s life, this book uses the power of pictures to speak volumes. The collection contains rarely seen images, each a special moment in time and history. With each picture of Ali, a new side of him is revealed.



They Must Fall: Muhammad Ali and the Men He Fought

Michael Brennan & Jimmy Breslin

This book is a collection of images and stories, focused on Ali’s most challenging and striking location: the ring. Award-winning photographer Michael Brennan reconnects with those Ali once fought, understanding how they carved out their own paths as athletes and career contemporaries among “The Greatest.” Every section of the book traces a different opponent, each with a careful focus.



Muhammad Ali, Kinshasa 1974

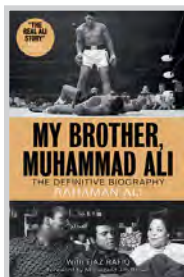
A graphic novel often captures a fascinating creative spin on the real world—as is the case with this recently published work. With a focus on the ‘Rumble in the Jungle’ match, the most famous fight of the 20th century, Ali comes alive in his match against George Forman in breathtaking photography and illustration.



Suggested Muhammad Ali Reading List for Adults, continued

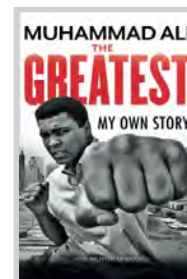
My Brother, Muhammad Ali: The Definitive Biography Rahaman Ali & Fiaz Rafiq

Dedicated to Muhammad Ali by his loving brother, this book captures the awe in a sibling bond. Rahaman Ali chronicles the personal and public reverence Ali earned through being his authentic self. With an intimate connection to the champion, Ali's only sibling shares stories, as well as family scenes and dialogue, that heartwarmingly illustrate his rise to fame.



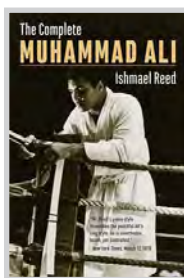
The Greatest: My Own Story Muhammad Ali, Richard Durham & Toni Morrison

Perhaps the best author of Muhammad Ali's story is, ultimately, himself. This autobiography, from the perspective of the man who lived it, is an expression of pride over one's own history. While it begins with a fact-based chronology and professional fight record, the novel blossoms into a captivating discussion, all recorded by writer Richard Durham from the six years he spent alongside Ali.



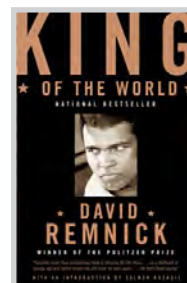
The Complete Muhammad Ali Ishmael Reed

Reed discusses Ali with a unique addition of previously uncharted documentary material. He traces Ali's connection to the Nation of Islam, numerous feats in competitive boxing, and his undeniable trailblazing place in modern African American history. The biography is a crucial and nuanced portrait of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Don't miss the [PBS Books Author Talk](#) with Ishmael Reed and his daughter Tennessee!



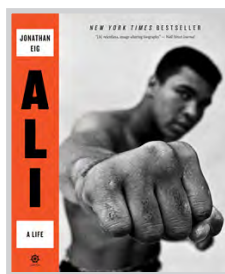
King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero David Remnick

This book showcases Ali, with a profound understanding of the context and landscape of the time when he both grew-up as Cassius Clay and rose to fame as Muhammad Ali. Remnick carefully traces crucial threads like race relations and sportsmanship, that made up the life of an American hero.



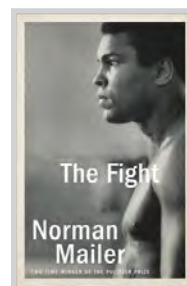
Ali: A Life Jonathan Eig

Winner of The Times Sports Biography of The Year of 2018, this book is a tribute to one of the most iconic figures and fighters of the 20th century and American history. The biography shares Ali's narrative: intricately detailed, honest, and up-close. Ken Burns himself calls Eig a master storyteller.



The Fight Norman Mailer

This book is about the primary boxing fight of the 20th century: that between Muhammad Ali and George Forman, two athletes with enormous talent, in 1974. The Fight in Kinshasa was a historic moment, charged with energy and strength from the fighters and the audience. Norman Mailer, a commentator at the time, and two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, narrates the tale to share with contemporary readers far and wide.





Muhammad Ali seated at a lunch counter, takes picture with fan. Miami, FL. February 25, 1971.

Credit: Charles Trainor

LOCAL ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

WE ARE THE GREATEST

Ali taught not only self-confidence, but also service to others. Use the film as an opportunity to highlight members of your community who are making a big difference in the lives of others. Honor them at station events, or involve the community in a social media campaign to celebrate their impact.

- Partner with local libraries to highlight civic leaders and the organizations they support.
- Engage Parkinson's care facilities, or support networks, to host a day celebrating patients and caretakers with an art activity or show a clip of the film and discuss.

“The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life.”

–Muhammad Ali



ALI'S SIX CORE PRINCIPLES

Use engagement events with youth, like writing contests, story collections, leadership talks, or athletic workshops, as an opportunity to share Ali's Six Core Principles.

- **Confidence:** Belief in oneself, one's abilities, and one's future.
- **Conviction:** A firm belief that gives one the courage to stand behind that belief, despite pressure to do otherwise.
- **Dedication:** The act of devoting all of one's energy, effort, and abilities to a certain task.
- **Respect:** Esteem for, or a sense of the worth or excellence of, oneself and others.
- **Giving:** To present voluntarily without expecting something in return.
- **Spirituality:** A sense of awe, reverence, and inner peace inspired by a connection to all of creation and/or that which is greater than oneself.

MUHAMMAD ALI ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

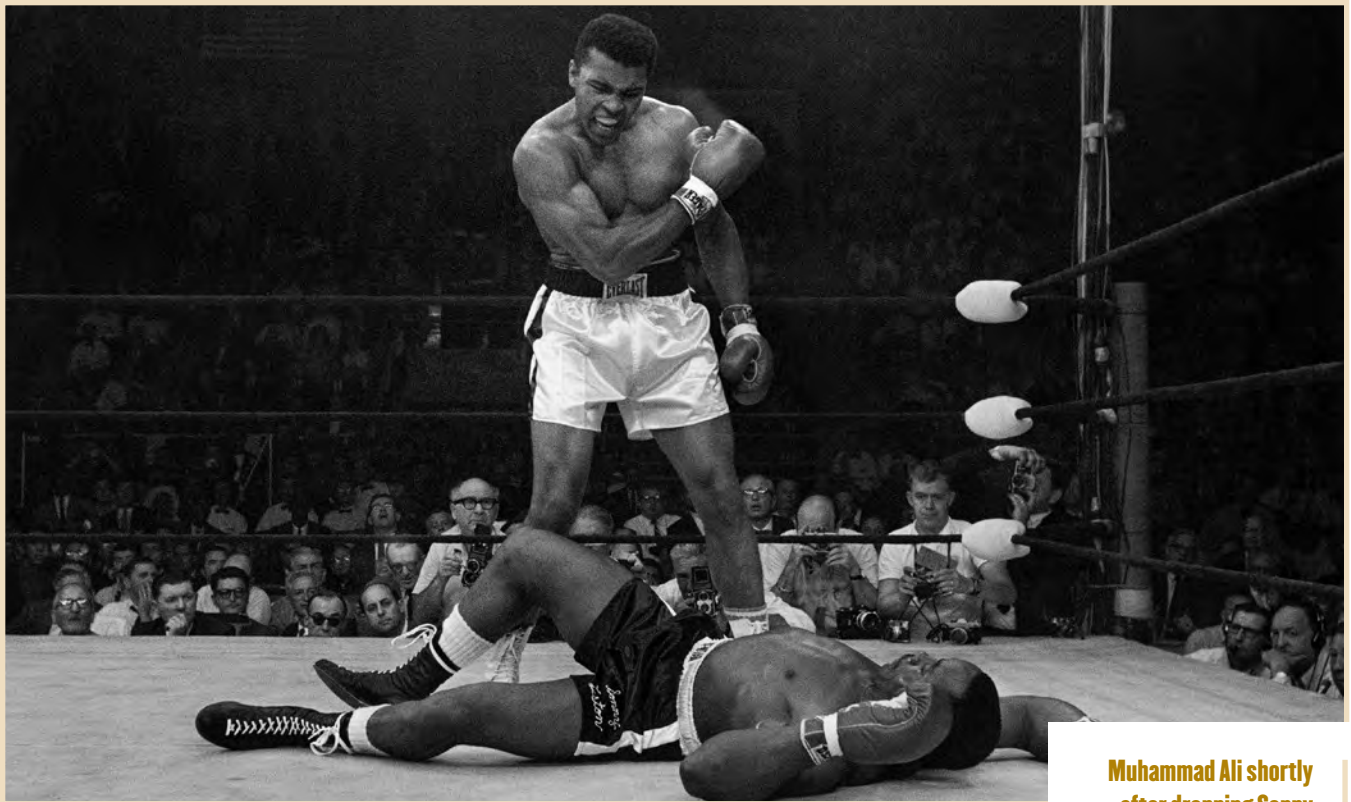
The [Muhammad Ali Oral History Project](#) is an ongoing initiative by the Muhammad Ali Center created to utilize the practice of oral history to document the life and legacy of Muhammad Ali.

Interviews for the Muhammad Ali Oral History Project are divided into two sections: Ali's life and his legacy. The first section, Life, is an archive of accounts by individuals who had a direct relationship with Ali. This includes, but is not limited to, family members, his boxing entourage, childhood friends, and so on. The second portion, Legacy, includes stories from individuals who have a story about meeting Ali but who did not have a direct, personal, or long-standing relationship with him.

The project is overseen by the Muhammad Ali Center's Collections Associate, Bess Goldy. For questions or to suggest an interviewee, contact Bess Goldy at bgoldy@alicenter.org.

The Muhammad Ali Center, located in Ali's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, is a multicultural center with an award-winning museum dedicated to the life and legacy of Muhammad Ali. The Center's museum experience and programs capture the inspiration derived from the story of Muhammad Ali's incredible life and the Six Core Principles that fueled his journey. More information is available at alicenter.org.





Muhammad Ali shortly after dropping Sonny Liston with a short hard right to the jaw in Lewiston, Maine. May 25, 1965.

Credit: John Rooney/AP Images

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

To facilitate a discussion using the series, ask questions that pertain to what you saw in the series or screener clips, and try to build connections that are local, relevant to your community, or tie into the expertise of the people that you've assembled. Here are some suggested questions that can act as a starting point to engage panels and participants.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What makes Muhammad Ali such a compelling figure? Why do you think he remains relevant as a public figure today?
- What aspects of Ali's life most intrigue you?
- How has our understanding of Ali changed over time?

ALI THE MAN

- How do you think Muhammad Ali's childhood impacted his career and role as a public figure?
- When Muhammad Ali's bicycle was stolen as a child, it led to him discovering boxing. His "Red Bike Moment" was a turning point in his life. How do you think his life would have been different had he not had his bike stolen?
- Why was it so significant that Cassius Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali?
- How did Ali shape his public persona? How did it differ from Ali, the man?
- The intro to the film shares a remark by novelist Norman Mailer, that Ali was 'the very spirit of the twentieth century'. Do you agree or disagree? Why/why not?
- Ali called himself "the People's Champion." What did he mean by that?
- If you could use one word to describe Muhammad Ali, what would it be?

ALI ON THE WORLD'S STAGE

- What do you think made Ali such a popular figure around the globe?
- How did Ali use his celebrity?
- Ali is known as the "Greatest of All Time." How did Ali view his legacy?
- How did Ali revolutionize the role of the athlete in American society? On the global stage?
- How has media, specifically sports media, changed the way audiences perceive athletes?
- What double standards did Ali encounter as a Black athlete?
- Why do you think so many people are inspired by Muhammad Ali?
- In what way was Ali's lighting of the Olympic torch in 1996 so impactful?

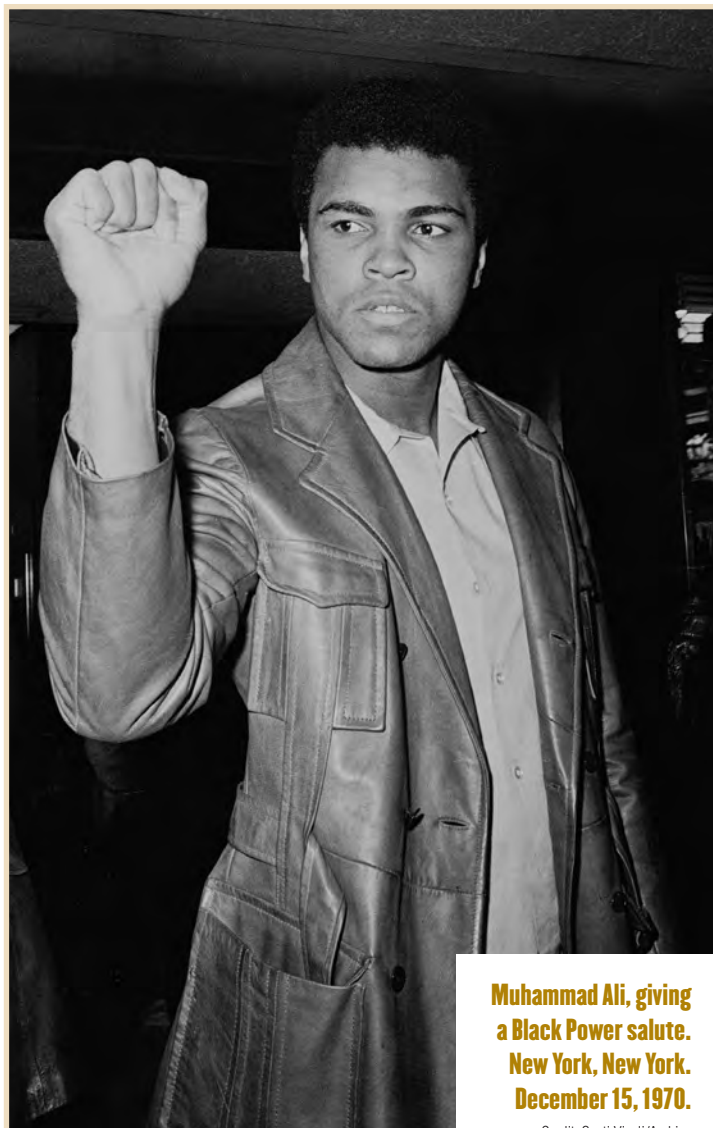


American swimmer Janet Evans passes the Olympic flame to Muhammad Ali during the 1996 Summer Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, Atlanta, Georgia, July 19, 1996.

Credit: Michael Probst/AP Images

ALI, ACTIVISM & THE MODERN ATHLETE

- Why are sports figures so influential?
- Muhammad Ali went from being seen as a divisive figure, to a popular American icon. What can be attributed to this change in public opinion?
- How are athletes or other social icons different from their real-life personae? Does the media ever really differentiate between athlete and individual?
- Why are rivalries so important in sports? How did Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier's rivalry elevate the sport of boxing? Would Ali have been as famous without this rivalry?
- Ali is one of a select group of athletes with “staying power” and continued relevance to sport and society today. His reputation continues to attract attention (both positive and negative). Why do you think that is?
- How did Muhammad Ali help define the role of the athlete in social justice movements and/or sports diplomacy?
- What is Ali's influence on athletes and Olympians today?



Muhammad Ali, giving a Black Power salute. New York, New York. December 15, 1970.

Credit: Santi Visali/Archive Photos via Getty Images

ALI, RACE & RELIGION

- What do you think attracted Ali to the Nation of Islam?
- What role did religion play in Ali's life? How did his identity as a Muslim shape his role as a public figure?
- How did Ali's outspoken reaffirmation of his religious identity influence public opinion of him?
- Ali conscientiously objected to the Vietnam War and refused the draft. In what ways does his decision still resonate today? What can his actions teach us about notions of patriotism and identity?
- How did Ali's refusal to fight in the Vietnam war, and the court cases that proceeded, reflect race relations in the US?

QUESTIONS FOR HISTORIANS OR SCHOLARS

- What makes Ali so influential? How would you describe his influence?
- In what ways have our understanding and acceptance of Ali changed over time?
- Is there a period of Ali's boxing career that you like best? Why?
- When teaching about Ali, what is something many people misunderstand about him?

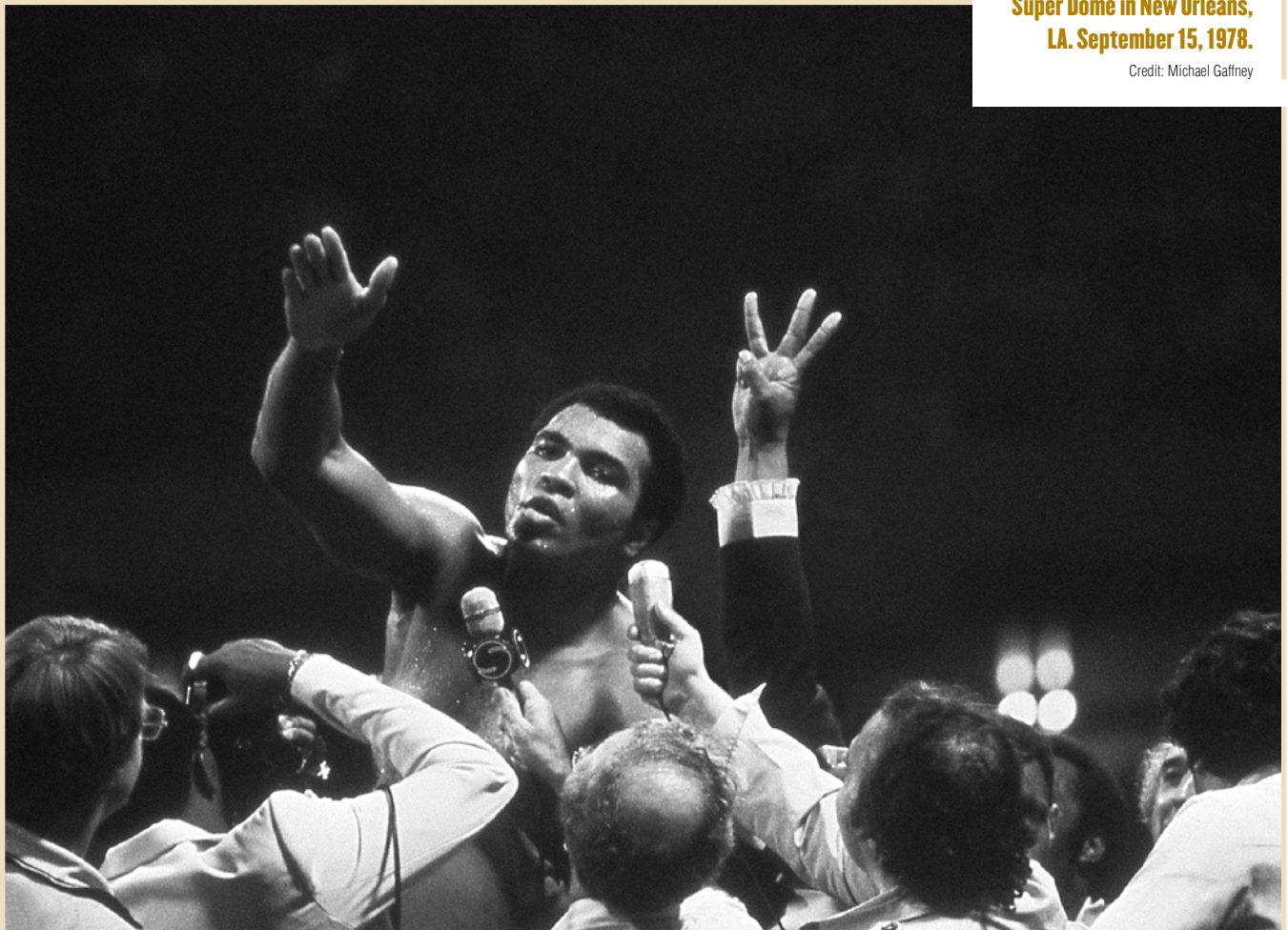
QUESTIONS FOR THE AUDIENCE

These questions could be incorporated into virtual poll questions to share throughout your event

- What is your earliest memory of Muhammad Ali?
- What is your favorite quote by Ali?
- What surprised you in watching the clip about Ali?
- Before watching the film/clips, what was your impression of Ali?

Muhammad Ali after winning back the Heavyweight Championship for an unprecedented third time by beating Leon Spinks at the Super Dome in New Orleans, LA. September 15, 1978.

Credit: Michael Gaffney





Muhammad Ali
on a visit to his
old grammar
school surrounded
by students.
Louisville, KY.
Circa 1977.

Credit: Michael Gaffney

EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT

Muhammad Ali has many cultural and historical connections that allow for a meaningful educational outreach project. PBS LearningMedia has developed a series of media-rich educational resources, including videos, primary sources, and modular support materials to create a collection of Social Studies and English Language Arts resources for grades 7–12.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

- PBS Education, in collaboration with 7–12 grade educators, developed a collection of six Social Studies and English Language Arts resources.
- Educators worked in pairs and in close collaboration with advisors specializing in anti-bias anti-racist pedagogy to create six lessons in total.
- Additional lesson(s) in the collection draw on the National Council for Social Studies' C3 [Inquiry Design Model](#) to engage students in critical media analysis.

Resources will be available on PBS LearningMedia and aligned to current standards for middle and high schools. Consider partnering with schools, teachers, PTAs, and humanity societies and organizations to create powerful educational activities, like:

- Providing and supporting professional development for teachers.
- Organizing a writing workshop or competition.
- Creating a local screening toolkit that can be distributed to schools that may highlight historical moments from Ali's life that are locally relevant.
- Speaking or presenting at a local teacher conference with clips and resources related to *Muhammad Ali*.
- Finding local stories about what university departments are doing around creative writing and storytelling to create powerful local interstitials or programming.
- Educator resources will be live by September 10th at www.pbslearningmedia.org/muhammad-ali

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & SUPPORT

- Official PBS Webpage: pbs.org/ali
- Promotional assets are available on the [PBS Source](#)
- Additional assets: [WETA ALI Dropbox](#) (password: WETAALI)
- Additional assets can be found on [PBS Pressroom](#)
- NOLA: MUHA

For questions on engagement and education assets, the film or screeners, please reach out to the National Impact & Engagement Team at WETA:

Amy Labenski at alabenski@weta.org or Chloe Kougias at ckougias@weta.org.

PBS | Passport

Beyond the broadcast of *Muhammad Ali*, stations have the opportunity to engage audiences on the PBS Video App as well as their local video portals. Starting on the night of its premiere, the film will be available for catch-up streaming (FVOD) for 3 weeks, and then PBS Passport streaming (MVOD). *Muhammad Ali* will stream on PBS Passport through 2028. Passport rights extend to Canada.

By promoting streaming, stations can attract new viewers and activate new members with the film's availability in PBS Passport. A host of promotional assets are available in the *Muhammad Ali* section of [PBS Source](#) and in the WETA *Muhammad Ali* [Dropbox](#).

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The *Muhammad Ali* Discussion and Engagement Guide was written by WETA with contributions by PBS Books and the Muhammad Ali Center.

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