

Muhammad Ali Quiz

WORKSHEET A

“When you’re as great as I am, it’s hard to be humble.”

Muhammad Ali

1. Muhammad Ali was born in
 - a) 1932.
 - b) 1942.
 - c) 1952.
2. Before he changed his name, he was known as
 - a) Joe Frazier.
 - b) George Foreman.
 - c) Cassius Clay.
3. He won the world heavyweight title
 - a) once.
 - b) twice.
 - c) three times.
4. Which of these was he not famous for?
 - a) Writing poetry about his opponents
 - b) Being sent to prison for repeated violent offences
 - c) Predicting the round in which he would win a fight
5. What did he do with his Gold Medal?
 - a) He donated it to charity
 - b) He threw it into the river
 - c) He made it into wedding rings
6. He has been married
 - a) four times.
 - b) five times.
 - c) six times.
7. In 1967 he was arrested for
 - a) shoplifting.
 - b) hitting a man in a bar.
 - c) refusing to join the army.
8. His ‘Rumble in the Jungle’ fight took place in
 - a) Zaire.
 - b) Congo.
 - c) Zimbabwe.
9. In 1984 he was diagnosed with
 - a) Hodgkinson’s disease.
 - b) Parkinson’s disease.
 - c) Foot and Mouth disease.
10. In Atlanta in 1996, he
 - a) carried the Olympic torch at the start of the Games.
 - b) returned to the ring for a celebrity match.
 - c) suffered a heart attack.

“Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.”

Muhammad Ali

“I am the Greatest”

WORKSHEET B

Muhammad Ali was born in Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A. on January 17th, 1942, and named Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. As a shy 12-year-old boy, he took up boxing to improve his confidence. In 1960, at the age of 18, he represented his country at the Rome Olympic Games, where he won a gold medal. He returned to the United States in triumph, but when he was turned away from a diner because of the colour of his skin he threw the medal into the river in disgust.

By 1964 Cassius Clay was already famous for his poetry describing how he would defeat his opponents. He wrote this brief rhyme before his fight with Sonny Liston, the heavyweight champion and favourite to win: *Sonny Liston is great, but he'll fall in eight.* The 22-year-old was also famous for predicting in which round he would win his fights. He was nearly right in the Sonny Liston rhyme; he won the match in the seventh round, not (as he had predicted) the eighth, and became the new World Heavyweight Champion.

In the same year he accepted the teachings of Islam and changed his name from Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali. Three years later, in 1967, Ali refused, for religious reasons, to be drafted into the army to go and fight in Vietnam. He was arrested, his boxing licence was suspended and his title was taken away. He couldn't box for three and a half years, from March 1967 to October 1970.

In 1971 he started his comeback. He challenged the then Heavyweight Champion Joe Frazier for the title but suffered the first defeat of his career. Three years later, in 1974, he fought George Foreman in the famous 'Rumble in the Jungle' fight in Zaire. He won the match and became the World Champion for the second time. Joe Frazier challenged him for the title in 1974 and again in 1975 in the 'Thrilla in Manila' fight, but lost both times.

Leon Spinks took the title from Ali in 1978 but six months later Ali won it back again, making history as the first man to win the title of World Heavyweight Champion three times. But age was catching up with him and his last fights were the hardest. He retired in 1981 but many people think he held on too long. In 1982 he started treatment for Parkinson's disease, which had been caused by repeated trauma to the head, particularly in his last few fights.

In the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, a frail-looking Ali proudly carried the torch and with a trembling hand lit the flame to start the Games.

His illness has visibly weakened his body, though his mind and spirit are still strong. His wife Lonnie says "Muhammad knows he has this illness for a reason. It's not by chance. Parkinson's disease has made him a more spiritual person."

Muhammad Ali has been married four times, he has won the world heavyweight title three times, he has nine children and a world full of fans. But perhaps his greatest legacy has been his great generosity and pacifism. This was recognised in 2000 when he became a United Nations Messenger of Peace. Not a bad tribute for the shy kid from Kentucky.