

## SELF-GUIDED LESSON: CHAMPIONS AREN'T MADE IN GYMS

---

Recommended: Grades 4 – 12

Core Content Areas: Physical Education, Health, Practical Living, Reading and Writing

Through this lesson, students will see how Muhammad was dedicated to his dream of becoming a champion. They will then reflect on his work and see how they can find their own greatness within themselves by following in his footsteps by working hard, believing in himself, etc. Pre- and post-visit activities are included.

## SELF-GUIDED LESSON: CHAMPIONS AREN'T MADE IN GYMS

---

### Helpful Pre-Arrival Hints:

In order to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable experience, we suggest:

1. Students bring with them a pencil (please, no pens) and a copy of the Champions Aren't Made in Gyms self-guide.
2. Students may be divided into pairs or small groups. Because of the large group size, we recommend that elementary and middle school students be assigned to small groups with an adult chaperone.

### Suggestions for Pre-Visit Activities:

1. Review the biography of Muhammad Ali (can be downloaded as a part of this program).
  - Take time to note that winning three heavyweight championships was hard work for Muhammad and, at the time, had never been done before. It took practice and dedication for him to reach that goal of becoming world champion.
  - Note also that boxing was not the only important aspect of his life – Muhammad was a champion of the people through his giving spirit.
2. Younger students can discuss any vocabulary words that the teacher feels would be helpful to enhance students' understanding of Muhammad's life story.

### Suggestions for Post-Visit Activities:

1. Review the completed Champions Aren't Made in Gyms self-guide.
2. Discuss Muhammad Ali's career and his personal attributes (i.e. how he reached his goals, what he chose to do with his fame).
3. Ask the students to write a paragraph or two on one of the following topics inspired by their visit to the Muhammad Ali Center:
  - Compare the career and life of Muhammad Ali to another athlete (current or past). Do you think the two athletes chose similar paths? Did they/would they make the same choices?
  - What is one of your favorite activities (sports, playing an instrument, acting, etc.)? What are things that you have to do that are similar to what Muhammad Ali had to do to train/practice? What do you do differently?
  - If you were famous, what would you do to make a difference in the world?
  - What is one of your "hopes and dreams" for the future? How do you plan on accomplishing this goal?

### Suggested Reading Materials:

I Shook Up The World , Maryum Ali  
The Greatest: Muhammad Ali , Walter Dean Myers  
Float Like a Butterfly , Ntozake Shange  
Muhammad Ali: The World's Champion , John Tessitore

## MUHAMMAD ALI BIOGRAPHY

---

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, on January 17, 1942, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. was named after his father (who was himself named for the Kentucky abolitionist, Cassius M. Clay). At age 12, he had his bicycle stolen and he reported the fact to a local policeman (and boxing trainer), Sergeant Joe Martin. Cassius wanted to “whup” the thief, but Martin suggested that Clay learn to fight first. Under his guidance, Clay rapidly advanced through the youth ranks. Clay won six Kentucky Golden Gloves while in high school and was allowed to graduate, despite his poor grades (later it would be determined that Clay was dyslexic, though at the time, he was simply thought to be a low achiever). Clay later joked about his lackluster academic record saying, “I said I was the Greatest, not the smartest.”

At the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Clay won a gold medal as a light heavyweight boxer. He then turned professional and, under the guidance of trainer Angelo Dundee, quickly became famous for his unusual style, his spectacular results, and his tireless self-promotion. He made a name for himself as the “Louisville Lip” by composing poems and predicting in which round he would knock out his opponent. He proudly sang his own praises, with sayings like “I am the greatest” and “I’m young, I’m pretty, I’m fast, and can’t possibly be beat.”

Clay’s first professional fight was in his hometown of Louisville. He won and went on to win 18 more before taking on the much feared and favored contender and titleholder, Sonny Liston. The fight took place on February 25, 1964. Clay won the fight and became the heavyweight champion of the world.

A few days later, Clay announced his affiliation with the Nation of Islam and that his name was changed to Muhammad Ali. In 1967, he refused to serve in the American army during the Vietnam War declaring himself a conscientious objector and famously saying that he “got no quarrel with them Viet Cong.” Ali was stripped of his championship belt, his license to box and was sentenced to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. The sentence was overturned on appeal three-and-a-half years later by a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court. Ali’s actions of refusing military service and joining the Nation of Islam made him a lightning rod of controversy. These events and Muhammad’s unprecedented boxing career made Ali one of that era’s most recognizable and controversial figures.

After being denied boxing licenses by more than twenty state boxing commissions, Ali took on Jerry Quarry in Atlanta – and won. However, in 1971, he suffered a setback when he lost his title fight, a bruising 15-round encounter with Joe Frazier at Madison Square Garden. This fight, known as “The Fight of the Century,” was perhaps one of the most famous and eagerly anticipated bouts of all time since it featured two skilled, undefeated fighters, both of whom had reasonable claims to the heavyweight crown. The fight lived up to the hype, and Frazier punctuated his victory by flooring Ali with a hard left hook in the final round. Ali’s religious views also evolved over time. He began to study the Qur’an, and converted to Sunni Islam.

Ali regained his title in 1974, beating George Foreman in the famous “Rumble in the Jungle” in Zaire. He would retain his title until a 1978 loss to Olympic champion Leon Spinks. He defeated Spinks in a rematch, becoming the heavyweight champion for a record third time. Ali retired from boxing permanently in 1981, with a career record of 56 wins, 5 losses and 37 knockouts.

Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson’s syndrome in 1982, a disorder of the nervous system that causes tremors or “shakiness” to different parts of the body. Even though Ali has slowed down over time, he remains a hero to millions around the world. In 1985, he was called upon to negotiate for the release of Americans held hostage in Lebanon. In 1996, he had the honor of lighting the Olympic Cauldron at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Traveling across continents, he has hand delivered food and medical supplies to such needy sites as the Harapan Kita Hospital for children in Jakarta, Indonesia and Sister Beltran’s orphanage for Liberian refugees on the Ivory Coast. In the U.S., he has helped such organizations as the Make-a-Wish-Foundation and the Special Olympics. In addition, Muhammad has been the recipient of countless awards, including Amnesty International’s “Lifetime Achievement Award,” the United Nations “Messenger of Peace” and GQ’s “Athlete of the Century.” In 2005, President Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

That same year, he and his wife, Lonnie, opened the Muhammad Ali Center in their hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. The Center’s mission promotes the beliefs and convictions that drove Muhammad to become the person he is today, appealing to the heart, spirit, and imagination of people worldwide. The Center inspires both children and adults to form new commitments in their lives in areas of personal growth, integrity and respect for others, and it offers the tools to make these commitments happen. On site, the Muhammad Ali Center boasts 2 ½ levels of compelling and interactive exhibits that both communicate the six values of Ali’s life – respect, confidence, conviction, dedication, spirituality, and giving – and encourage visitors to find greatness within themselves.

Muhammad Ali has been married four times. He and his wife, Lonnie, have been married since 1986 and have an adopted son. Muhammad has a total of nine children.

## CHAMPIONS AREN'T MADE IN GYMS

---

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### Dedication Pavilion

1. When Cassius Clay was training to become a champion boxer, he would drink
  - a. Water with \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Milk with \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you were training to become a champion in any sport, name three foods that you would want to eat:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. List three physical activities Muhammad did to help his body get into shape for boxing:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is an activity that you participate in regularly? \_\_\_\_\_
5. List two things that you do to "train/practice" for this activity?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Confidence Pavilion

1. Muhammad always believed in himself. He told people, "I am the \_\_\_\_\_."

#### Giving Pavilion

Athletes and other celebrities often give back to their communities.

1. Muhammad gave in three ways: his wealth, small kindnesses, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Muhammad once said, "Service to others is the \_\_\_\_\_ we pay for our \_\_\_\_\_ here on earth."
3. Muhammad did not just give of himself after he retired from boxing. Look along the timeline of Ali's professional career in the torch area (the oval area where you can see the film shown on the boxing ring) for one of the charitable acts Muhammad did during his professional boxing career. Describe the event below.

---

---

---

4. Name two ways can you give of your time to help others:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

### Train with Ali (the hands-on boxing area)

You have heard the phrase, "Practice makes perfect." Like any other activity, you have to learn the basics of boxing before you can become a champion like Muhammad.

1. Take a boxing lesson with Laila Ali (Muhammad's daughter and professional boxer). Name two new moves you learned from her.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Press the button next to the speed bag. What does this sound measure? \_\_\_\_\_. Name two other activities that require this skill: \_\_\_\_\_

### All Ali All The Time

In the interactive boxing "on-demand" area, choose one of Muhammad's fights to watch.

1. Who did Muhammad fight in the match you chose? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What year was it? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who won? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name a move you learned from Laila (other than the two mentioned above) that you saw in the fight: \_\_\_\_\_

### Walk With Ali (Sense of Self, Sense of Others, Sense of Purpose)

Complete the activity of the VIA Strengths computer stations. There are 24 strengths:

1. What is your signature strength? \_\_\_\_\_

### Hope and Dream Wall

We don't all have to be a boxer like Muhammad Ali in order to be great - everyone should find their own path. Whatever your goals are, we want you to be the greatest that you can be.

1. Find a tile that you like.

a. What country is that tile's artist from? \_\_\_\_\_

b. How old is the artist? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are your hopes and dreams? (You may either write in the space below or draw a picture like the ones on the wall.)

---



---



---

## CHAMPIONS AREN'T MADE IN GYMS (ANSWER KEY)

---

### ELEMENTARY

#### Dedication Pavilion

- When Cassius Clay was training to become a champion boxer, he would drink
  - Water with garlic
  - Milk with raw eggs
- If you were training to become a champion in any sport, name three foods that you would want to eat:
  - A variety of answers would work here: vegetables, fruit, protein, etc.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- List three physical activities Muhammad did to help his body get into shape for boxing:
  - There are more than three answers: spar, jump rope, run, worked out at the gym, circuit drills, running backwards
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- What is an activity that you participate in regularly? Subjective
- List two things that you do to "train/practice" for this activity?
  - Subjective
  - \_\_\_\_\_

#### Confidence Pavilion

- Muhammad always believed in himself. He told people, "I am the Greatest."

#### Giving Pavilion

Athletes and other celebrities often give back to their communities.

- Muhammad gave in three ways: his wealth, small kindnesses, time and effort
- Muhammad once said, "Service to others is the rent we pay for our room here on earth."
- Muhammad did not just give of himself after he retired from boxing. Look along the timeline of Ali's professional career in the torch area (the oval area where you can see the film shown on the boxing ring) for one of the charitable acts Muhammad did during his professional boxing career. Describe the event below.

There are many – if they have an answer, they likely found one of the "golden tickets" in our torch area

#### Train with Ali (the hands-on boxing area)

You have heard the phrase, "Practice makes perfect." Like any other activity, you have to learn the basics of boxing before you can become a champion like Muhammad.

1. Take a boxing lesson with Laila Ali (Muhammad's daughter and professional boxer). Name two new moves you learned from her.

- a. Moves taught: pivot, shuffle, jab, hook, three punch combination, hook, chin down (or tucked), elbows tucked, head tuck, hands up
- b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Press the button next to the speed bag. What does this sound measure? Rhythm Name two other activities that require this skill:

There are many: the pictures in the exhibits show music and chopping vegetables

## All Ali All The Time

In the interactive boxing "on-demand" area, choose one of Muhammad's fights to watch.

OPPONENT	YEAR	WINNER
Sonny Liston	1964	Ali
Henry Cooper	1966	Ali
Cleveland Williams	1966	Ali
Ernie Terrell	1967	Ali
Oscar Bonavena	1970	Ali
Joe Frazier	1971	Frazier
Jimmy Ellis	1971	Ali
Jerry Quarry	1972	Ali
Floyd Patterson	1972	Ali
Ken Norton	1973	Norton
Joe Frazier	1974	Ali
George Foreman	1974	Ali
Joe Frazier	1975	Ali
Ken Norton	1976	Ali
Leon Spinks	1978	Ali

4. Name a move you learned from Laila (other than the two mentioned above) that you saw in the fight:

See list above (under "Train with Ali") for complete list of moves taught

## Walk With Ali (Sense of Self, Sense of Others, Sense of Purpose)

Complete the activity of the VIA Strengths computer stations. There are 24 strengths:

1. What is your signature strength? Creativity, Curiosity, Open-mindedness, Love of learning, Perspective, Bravery  
Persistence, Integrity, Vitality, Love, Kindness, Social intelligence, Citizenship, Fairness, Leadership, Forgiveness and mercy Humility  
and modesty Prudence, Self-regulation, Spirituality, Gratitude, Hope, Humor, Appreciation of beauty and excellence

## Hope and Dream Wall

We don't all have to be a boxer like Muhammad Ali in order to be great - everyone should find their own path. Whatever your goals are, we want you to be the greatest that you can be.

1. Find a tile that you like.

- a. What country is that tile's artist from? 141 countries are represented
- b. How old is the artist? Most are elementary school age

2. What are your hopes and dreams? Subjective

## SCHOOL VISIT SURVEY

School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students \_\_\_\_\_

School Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Grade (circle one): Elementary Middle High Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in one of our Educational Programs. Your honest feedback will help us to serve students and teachers better.

Please rate each of the following aspects of your experience at the Muhammad Ali Center:

1. I feel that the quality of the program was

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

2. I feel that the length of the program was

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

3. I feel that the program's alignment with our school curriculum is

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

4. What aspect(s) of the mandated curriculum do you feel that the program serves best?

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

5. I feel that communication between Muhammad Ali Center staff and our school staff was

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

6a) Did you use the educational materials provided by the Muhammad Ali Center

To prepare your students for their visit \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

As a follow up or culminating activity upon your return to class \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

6b) I feel that the educational materials that I received from the Muhammad Ali Center are

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

7. I feel that our class visit to the Muhammad Ali Center was

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

7b. My students felt that our class visit to the Muhammad Ali Center was

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

Comments/Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you feel that your students were inspired by their visit to Muhammad Ali Center? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If so, in what way(s)?

Additional Comments or Suggestions (please use back if needed):