

# HONORING THE GREATEST THROUGH CITY OF ALI

A Comprehensive  
Curriculum Guide for Middle  
and High School Exploration

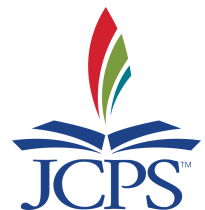


# HONORING THE GREATEST THROUGH CITY OF ALL

A Comprehensive  
Curriculum Guide for Middle  
and High School Exploration

Created By  
Aven Cook & Rachel Klein | Anti-Racist Specialists  
Jefferson County Public Schools | Louisville, KY

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The background of the page is filled with numerous orange butterfly silhouettes of various sizes and orientations, scattered across the white space. The butterflies are stylized, showing the outlines of their wings and bodies.

**“Don’t count the days;  
make the days count.”**

**Muhammad Ali**

# OPENING LETTER

Muhammad Ali lived a life so big and so bold, that's it's virtually impossible to summarize all he did and all he meant to so many people. That's why taking on the challenge of creating *City of Ali* seemed at first like an impossible task, especially because his incredible story had already served as the subject of documentaries by multiple filmmakers.

To make the process manageable and produce something original, we focused on connections. Our title *City of Ali* has two meanings: 1.) The literal city of Louisville, Kentucky, where Cassius Clay grew up, and Muhammad Ali came home for his final rest; 2.) The global community of people whose lives Ali touched along the way. This film is the story of what happened when those two communities came together in an otherwise challenging time for the city, the nation and the world.

That gathering took place over seven days in early June 2016 (a period locally known as "Ali Week") and saw more than 100,000 people line Louisville's streets and close to a billion people watch from all over the world to say good-bye to The Greatest.

At the time, I was working as the speechwriter for Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer who told me and other members of his staff that we needed to find a way to tell the story of that week from the perspective of our city, because we'd just seen and experienced something we never would again.

The five-year process of producing *City of Ali* required the work of numerous partners, including the Muhammad Ali Center, Brown-Forman, Louisville Tourism, Louisville Metro Government, the James Graham Brown Foundation, Song Stew Entertainment and many others. The *City of Ali* filmmakers are deeply grateful to them all.

One of the priorities that emerged in this partnership was to use this film to introduce a new generation to Ali's life and legacy. Why he mattered so much, particularly to their parents and grandparents. And why his time growing up in Louisville mattered. We believe there are lessons in these moments that will

resonate across generations. That's one reason *City of Ali* includes the voices of people who knew Ali when he was young, alongside the voices of young people today, people who never saw Ali fight, who had no personal connection to him, but who found inspiration in his story and his example nevertheless.

One reason Ali still matters is because he fought for the righteous cause of bringing people together and convincing us all to respect our common humanity. That work is as important as ever. Our hope is that by making *City of Ali* and this specially-designed curriculum available to teachers and students, we can help further that work, one classroom at a time.

Thank you for taking on this work as well.

In the hours after Ali's passing, Mayor Fischer delivered these words in what became the first public eulogy for The Champ:

*While there can only be one Muhammad Ali, his journey from Grand Avenue to global icon serves as a reminder that there are young people with the potential for greatness in houses and neighborhoods all over our city, our nation and our world.*

*There is no limit to what our kids can do if we help them realize their full human potential - and there is no excuse for us to do anything less than our best to help them find that greatness in themselves.*

*That's how we can be champions. Muhammad Ali has shown us the way.*

## **Graham Shelby, Director**

On behalf of the *City of Ali* filmmaking team.

# INTRODUCTION

Louisville is a city with a complicated history, one that boasts a rich culture of bourbon, horse racing, and a thriving independent business scene. However, it reckons with a past that is mired in racism, segregation, and injustice. Dan Gediman, producer of *The Reckoning: Facing the Legacy of Slavery in America* podcast, shares that, “Kentucky stayed in the Union during the Civil War, seemingly on the right side of the battle over slavery, but the truth is far more complex. Many white Kentuckians fought to hang onto slavery and the wealth the enslaved provided. In the years that followed, white citizens campaigned to downplay slavery’s role in the state’s economy and culture while working to deny Black citizens a seat at the table.” More than just a few remnants of this period of history are still apparent in Louisville, Kentucky, the hometown of world-famous boxer and humanitarian Muhammad Ali.

On the official website, the creators and producers of *City of Ali* explain that the film “details how the death of Muhammad Ali brought the people of his Kentucky hometown - and the world- together for one unforgettable week. On June 3, 2016, Muhammad Ali’s passing came in the midst of a bitter U.S. presidential election, a proposed Muslim ban, and the global expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement. Yet on the day of Ali’s funeral procession, more than 100,000 people lined the streets of Louisville to celebrate his life. Over one billion people worldwide tuned in to events, including Ali’s memorial, held in the packed KFC YUM! Center. Stories of the Louisville Lip’s wit, generosity, swagger, and commitment to justice were retold by President Bill Clinton, Billy Crystal, Lonnie Ali, and many others.”

This film delivers an emotional and impactful experience for any viewer, but it did not take long for the people behind its inception and production to realize the merit it would have in classrooms across both Louisville, Kentucky, and beyond. They partnered with Aven Cook and Rachel Klein to create high-quality instructional materials to support the viewing and processing of the film. Ms. Cook and Ms. Klein are former English language arts teachers and current specialists in the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Poverty in the Jefferson County Public Schools system in Louisville, Kentucky. To live in Ali’s hometown and witness the impact Ali has had on its community, Ms. Cook and Ms. Klein



found it to be a humbling opportunity to extend his legacy of service into the local and broader national and world communities.

Their work promises to support the delivery of high-quality instruction to students in both the middle and high school grades. As such, a set of middle school lessons and a set of high school lessons have been designed to include principles of culturally responsive instruction, deeper learning, inquiry, interdisciplinary practices, and of course, content standards. Further, each set of lessons leads up to a culminating project that allows students to synthesize their learning and engage in research based on a personal topic of interest.

Used in its entirety, this set of lessons and resources can extend learning for several weeks. Not only are there lessons and projects contained within, but also extension activities and a set of essay prompts. Taking advantage of every aspect of this instructional guide ensures a meaningful learning experience that is sure to impact students for years to come.

Within Jefferson County Public Schools, the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Poverty is committed to anti-racist, culturally responsive pedagogies and practices. This body of work reflects that commitment as it demonstrates student-centered instruction. It opens a world of possibilities for exploration and contextualization of the self. Students are consistently encouraged to connect to the film, Ali's life, his guiding principles, and the history of fighting injustice as it relates to the worlds in which they exist daily. This commitment, while supported by the mere existence of a department such as the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Poverty, is not one that should be unique to the Jefferson County Public Schools system of Louisville, Kentucky. As such, Appendix B has been designed to support districts across the country in their efforts to attain racial equity, be they fledgling efforts or ones already supported by similarly existing departments. While many might view this curricular resource as disruptive, it is critical that we allow our students to grapple with complex topics and provide safe structures within which to do so. Curriculum such as this positions students to assess the world around them, and develop the skills necessary to upend systems of oppression.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This content has been designed by individuals who are employed by the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) district of Louisville, Kentucky. Throughout, educators will encounter references to a variety of resources or items that do not exist outside of JCPS or the state of Kentucky. The content designers wanted to maintain integrity to the expectations of their district and state; however, they believe that with some descriptive information, users outside of JCPS will understand the purpose and inclusion of attention to these expectations. Outside users will likely find them to be beneficial to the learning experiences of any student, as they are built on principles of culturally responsive practices and deeper learning.

## The Affirming Racial Equity (ARE) Tool

- **Content Integration:** Teachers regularly utilize examples from a wide variety of cultures and groups in lessons and units.
- **Knowledge Construction:** Teachers intentionally plan lessons to ensure students understand how oppression and systemic racism influence knowledge and perceptions of knowledge.
- **Prejudice Elimination:** Teachers intentionally plan lessons to build understanding and foster intergroup relations.
- **Equitable Pedagogy:** Teachers modify methods, resources, and strategies to facilitate academic achievement of underrepresented societal groups.
- **Empowering Classroom Culture:** Teachers recognize the value of culture and race in relationship building with both students and families, so teachers build positive relationships that are the foundation for a healthy, inclusive, and safe learning environment.
- **A.R.E. Through Assessment:** Teachers intentionally plan assessments that allow students to showcase their knowledge and mastery through cross-curriculum skill sets with an embedded and purposeful feedback cycle.

# AFFIRMING RACIAL EQUITY (A.R.E.) TOOL

@JCPSDEPI | #AREYouJCPS



## What is it?

A resource to begin incorporating more racially equitable pedagogy and practices into curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

## Who uses it?

- Teachers – To plan in their PLCs to ensure racial equity.
- Academic Instructional Coaches – To coach and give feedback to teachers and PLCs regarding instructional materials and resources and planning.
- APs/Principals – To generate items to look for during coaching, observations, and walk-throughs.

## When is it used?

The ARE Tool has six components that can and should be used throughout the PLC process weekly and for routine feedback from AICs, APs, and Principals.

## The Six Components

- Content Integration
- Knowledge Construction
- Prejudice Elimination
- Equitable Pedagogy
- Empowering Classroom Culture
- A.R.E. Through Assessment

## How does this tool add to racial equity?

Utilization of this tool is being monitored to guide targeted coaching and resources at a district level. This ensures that all schools are supported in pursuing racial equity in curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy.

## The Backpack of Success Skills

- Prepared and Resilient Learner
  - Demonstrates knowledge of content skills and standards
  - Applies content knowledge to real world contexts and in interdisciplinary ways
  - Reflects on successes and challenges, and makes appropriate adjustments in order to meet academic, personal and professional goals
  - Employs organizational and project management skills to achieve academic, personal and professional growth
  - Sets personal goals for transition readiness, explores post-secondary options and takes actionable steps towards realizing both
- Globally and Culturally Competent Citizen
  - Explores community and global issues from the perspectives of those most impacted and creates actionable solutions
  - Employs democratic processes to come to decisions and solutions
  - Compassionate and empathetic toward others
  - Promotes a sense of belonging for others
  - Respects different cultures, perspectives and beliefs

- **Emerging Innovator**
  - Employs a sense of curiosity and inquiry; seeks to learn
  - Asks questions to extend, challenge and clarify the thinking of self and others
  - Applies a design process (e.g. research, ideation, modeling, prototyping and testing) to create new solutions, products and processes
  - Uses relevant information and feedback to continually improve solutions, products and processes
  - Takes appropriate risks, and makes adjustments based on successes and failures
- **Effective Communicator**
  - Uses appropriate conventions and evidence to convey ideas clearly in writing, verbally, digitally and visually
  - Adapts message to purpose and needs of the audience
  - Uses discipline-specific writing conventions, formats and vocabulary to communicate ideas
  - Uses technology effectively and responsibly
- **Productive Collaborator**
  - Works effectively with diverse groups to accomplish a common goal
  - Gives and receives meaningful feedback
  - Assumes personal responsibility for team outcomes
  - Actively listens to understand others' ideas and perspectives



# VIEWING GUIDE

*City of Ali* is an energetic, emotionally-compelling tribute to Muhammad Ali's life, achievements, and influence that he had worldwide. This film centers his humble and catalytic beginnings in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, but his story is easily appreciated in both the Bluegrass state and beyond. As you prepare to show this film to your students, please take time to review this viewing guide so that you can provide an experience for your students that is engaging, as well as one that honors the individuals who sit in your classroom.

## Rating

This film has not been rated by the MPAA; however, director Graham Shelby has stated that it is PG.

## Access

School districts may opt to purchase a viewing license. For information about licensing the film for your school, go to <https://www.cityofali.com/education>.

Additionally, the following streaming services carry *City of Ali* for rent and purchase:

- Apple TV
- Google Play Movies
- iTunes
- Amazon Prime Video
- YouTube Movies & Shows

## Structure of the Film

*City of Ali* progresses and is organized by a series of “rounds”, which is an intentional design choice. This makes the viewing of the film with students manageable and impactful, as there are logical stopping points. You'll see this reflected in the progression of lessons that have been designed for classroom educators to use as they share the film with their students.

## Content Notices

While this film is largely a celebration of the life and achievements of Muhammad Ali, it doesn't shy away from documented moments of social unrest

and racial tension that occurred during his life. There are also moments where featured people use language that may be considered offensive, controversial, or no longer socially accepted.

- Ali's daughter, Rasheda Ali, recalls the time when her father was near death and being tended to in a hospital. While his family is gathered around his hospital bed, a sound is heard that is reminiscent of a bell. She lovingly says to her father, "Daddy, get yo' ass up!" Please alert your students about this language ahead of viewing so that they can listen to and engage with the meaning of her words, rather than be surprised and/or reactionary in the moment. **(Round 1 at 02:20)**
- There are scenes and media clips where people are actively protesting the murders of Black and Brown people from the past several years, especially as they lead up to the genesis of the Black Lives Matter movement and a rise in Islamophobia. These scenes may be potentially traumatizing to some student viewers, and a conversation about these scenes needs to be held ahead of viewing so that you can gauge how to proceed during these scenes. **(Round 2, 13:50 -15:43)**
- Similarly, there is historical footage depicting all-white police officers apprehending and forcing a Black man into a police vehicle. This too requires a contextualizing conversation with students ahead of viewing so that you can gauge how to proceed. **(Round 3 at 17:45)**
- There is a scene featuring an interview between Muhammad Ali and British television talk show host Michael Parkinson where Ali recounts his experience at a diner where the white waitress tells him, "We don't serve Negroes." He responds, "I don't eat em, either. Just give me a cup of coffee and a hamburger." It is important to help students understand the historical context of the word "Negro" to refer to a Black or African American person, and that it is no longer considered acceptable. **(Round 3, 17:19 - 17:30)**
- In Round 4, there's a scene detailing a moment of Muhammad Ali's life where he sees a cartoon in the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper depicting an enslaved Black Muslim man praying in Arabic, and who then is shown being beaten by a slave master for "using that language and religion". These scenes may be potentially traumatizing to some student viewers, and a conversation about these scenes should be held ahead of viewing so that you can gauge how to proceed during these scenes. **(Round 4, 29:24 - 29:45)**
- Muhammad Ali discusses his reasons to be opposed to being drafted into

serving in the Vietnam War and says, “My conscience won’t let me shoot my brother... and shoot them for what? They never called me n-----.” Please alert your students about this language ahead of viewing so that they can be prepared to hear it in the context of time and space. You may opt to preview this particular moment and skip past it, instead offering students a summary of what Ali said and the meaning of his words. A conversation about this scene needs to be held ahead of viewing so that you can gauge how to proceed during this moment. **(Round 4, 32:27)**

- Several religious leaders are interviewed for this film as they offer their perspectives on Ali’s character, choices, and personal history. Please help your students understand that you are not showing the film to encourage the practice of any one particular faith, but rather to provide personal perspectives that align with their faith beliefs.

## Rounds & Times

- Introduction (00:00 - 01:56)
- Round 1: Shaking Up the World (01:57 - 13:45)
- Round 2: Floating and Stinging (13:46 - 16:48)
- Round 3: Grand Avenue (16:49 - 28.50)
- Round 4: The Rent You Pay (28:51 - 41:02)
- Round 5: Making the Days Count (41:03 - 46:21)
- Round 6: Doing the Roadwork (46:22 - 52:49)
- Round 7: Saying Goodbye to the Greatest (52:50 - 1:04:01)
- Final Round: A Better World (1:04:02 - 1:17:04)

# MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON PLANS

## Lesson Description & Overview

These lessons have been designed to correspond to the rounds in which *City of Ali* is organized. Each lesson requires the students to watch a particular round or set of rounds immediately following the Opening Activity before engaging in the remainder of the lesson.

- Before beginning this unit of lessons with your students, please ensure that you've fully reviewed the **Viewing Guide** found on **page 8** of this booklet. It will allow you to get ahead of some points in the movie that require some forewarning or additional preparation for conversation.
- It is strongly recommended that you review and employ strategies from the Learning for Justice publication *Let's Talk!* before, during, and after instruction. More information about this resource can be found in **Appendix B** on **page 76** of this booklet.
- There are formative assessments built into the lessons by way of opening activities, journaling, group tasks, and exit slips. However, it is strongly recommended that the teacher design additional opportunities to formatively assess progress towards mastery of the content standards if they perceive a need to do so.
- These lessons are designed to support students as they engage in a research project once they have processed each round of the film. This project should be considered a summative assessment, not an option. If a teacher prefers a different approach, then it is strongly recommended that they design a different summative assessment, as students deserve an opportunity to demonstrate the skills and concepts that they have mastered.

## Driving Questions

1. How does a person's surroundings influence who they become?
2. How can a person influence their surroundings?
3. How can we honor someone's legacy through service and action?



# Standards Addressed

## English Language Arts

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for ELA*

- RI 8.1 Cite relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI 8.3 Analyze how an author uses comparisons, analogies or categories to make connections among and
- distinctions between ideas over the course of a text.
- RI 8.5 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

## Social Studies

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for SS, Inquiry: Using Evidence*

- 8.I.U.E.1 Use multiple sources to develop claims in response to compelling and supporting questions. 8.I.U.E.2 Create claims and counterclaims, using appropriate evidence, to construct an argument to answer compelling and supporting questions.
- 8.I.U.E.3 Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection to answer compelling and supporting questions.

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for SS, Inquiry: Communicating Conclusions*

- 8.I.CC.4 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions about ways to take action on current local, regional and global issues.

## Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices

- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.
- Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
- Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.
- Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

## Social Justice Standards Addressed

- **Identity**
  - ID.6-8.5 I know there are similarities and differences between my home culture and the other environments and cultures I encounter, and I can be myself in a diversity of settings.
- **Diversity**
  - DI.6-8.10 I can explain how the way groups of people are treated today, and the way they have been treated in the past, shapes their group identity and culture.
- **Justice**
  - JU.6-8.12 I can recognize and describe unfairness and injustice in many forms including attitudes, speech, behaviors, practices and laws.
  - JU.6-8.15 I know about some of the people, groups and events in social justice history and about the beliefs and ideas that influenced them.
- **Action**
  - AC.6-8.20 I will work with friends, family and community members to make our world fairer for everyone, and we will plan and coordinate our actions in order to achieve our goals.

## **Affirming Racial Equity Tool**

- **Content Integration**
  - Students are allowed windows into the experiences, perspectives, cultures, and lives of others (both characters and peers) as well as mirrors of themselves through conversations, topic explorations, choices, and texts
  - The lessons explore contributions, ideas, and quotes from a variety of racial, religious, and cultural perspectives
- **Knowledge Construction**
  - Students position themselves contextually within the content as they examine issues and causes that are relevant to them
  - Students conduct research that is connected to their interests
  - Students examine word choices and their impact
- **Prejudice Elimination**
  - Teacher is encouraged to group students intentionally so that multiple

- experiences, perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles are reflected in conversations and student-generated products
- Positive exploration of students' personal identities is provided
- **Equitable Pedagogy**
  - Student choice is provided many times throughout the unit (topic choice, product choice, choice of peer(s) for revision, choice in how to demonstrate mastery)
  - Student voice is elevated when creating expectations for work sessions, activities, and presentations
  - Students are encouraged to discover people, topics, and events that are relevant and important to them (at varying levels- local, national, international)
  - Students look at real-world people, topics, and events
- **Empowering Classroom Culture**
  - Unit allows for head-on discussions about race, injustice, and activism; contextualizes them locally, nationally, and internationally
  - Classroom culture (via lesson plan progressions) values student input, individual values, student choices, student interests, and differences as they contribute to an overall collective consciousness
  - Student interests drive the direction of discussions, as well as how students present their learning, and what they want to learn about
  - Teacher is encouraged to group students intentionally so that multiple experiences, perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles are reflected in conversations and student-generated products
- **ARE Through Assessment**
  - Formative and summative assessments are designed for students to be able to demonstrate their growth in a wide variety of ways
  - Time is provided for students to receive feedback from their peers and their teacher throughout the lessons and within the project timeline

## **Backpack of Success Skills**

- **Prepared and Resilient Learner**
  - Students manage time effectively during work session days

- Students look at failure(s), confusion, hardships, and experiences as a means of growth and learning
- **Effective Communicator**
  - There are multiple opportunities for students to share their thinking with others, to revise their thoughts based on small and large group conversations, and to present their thinking throughout the unit plan
  - All students will select a person, topic, or event to research and present in a self-selected product to present to their peers
- **Productive Collaborator**
  - Opportunities for small-group and large-group conversations/products provided
  - Peer feedback is built into many points throughout the unit
- **Emerging Innovator**
  - Students are given choice of topic to study and how they'll present their findings (choice of product) for the end project
  - Interdisciplinary connections to skills and knowledge are encouraged throughout the unit
- **Globally and Culturally Competent Citizen**
  - Teacher-generated groupings throughout the unit are intended to expose group members to several different experiences, ways of thinking, lifestyles, and cultures
  - Group consciousness is elevated through conversations, intentional groupings, student-driven choices, diverse content, and unique presentation styles
  - Group decision-making around class expectations creates an awareness and inclusion of different values
  - Presentations provide exposure and awareness of a multitude of causes and viewpoints
  - Students are given opportunities to look at issues at local, national, and international levels

## Materials & Resources

- Student Guides have been designed to complement lessons 1-6 and can be found [here](#).
- Resources for the final project can be found [here](#).

# LESSON 1: ROUND 1 - “SHAKING UP THE WORLD”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Draft a claim and support it with evidence.
  - Analyze two sources for similarities and differences, and draft a statement to support my analysis.
  - Draw connections between the statements and opinions of various people.
- We will:
  - Work together in groups to make sense of what we learn in the first round of *City of Ali*.
  - Craft collective statements based on group discussions that relate to the movie and an image.
  - Explore how one person can impact their surroundings.

## Student Guide

Lesson 1 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

The film opens with the following quote from Muhammad Ali: “I wish people would love everybody the way they love me. It would be a better world.”

**Ask Students:** Regardless of your knowledge of the life and achievements of Muhammad Ali, what do you think he meant when he said this? What predictions might this quote lead you to develop about the film, Ali’s life, or otherwise?

The Opening Activity can be facilitated through journaling, partner discussions, or small group discussions. Ensure that you solicit student responses for the

whole class to hear after they have been given time to answer the questions in whichever format you deem appropriate.

**Tell Students:** As you watch the introduction and Round 1, pay attention to details that support or refute your prediction. Make note of these details in a notebook or digital notes page (see “Lesson 1 Student Guide” linked above).

Play the Introduction and Round 1: “Shaking Up the World” before moving on to the “Guide and Engage” portion of this lesson.

## Guide & Engage

**Present to Students:** Former President Barack Obama is featured saying, “It’s very rare that a figure captures the attention of the entire world.”

- Who else in history has risen to this status? How or why does that happen?
- We learn later in this scene that people from around the world came to pay their respects when Ali passed, sometimes with their whole families. International news outlets came to Louisville, Kentucky as well to cover the days leading up to Muhammad Ali’s memorial service. How does this information support President Obama’s statement?
- Based on the Introduction and Round 1, do we have enough information to fully understand how Ali rose to worldwide celebrity status? What questions do you have about his life at this point? What more do we need to know to better answer these questions?
  - Take note of student responses somewhere that is visible or accessible for all students.

## Explore & Apply

Intentionally group students to do the following:

- Discuss Pastor Ahmaad Edmund’s statement: “Even in his declining health, your superhero doesn’t die.”
- Compare this quote with the imagery found on the cover of this [Superman vs Muhammad Ali, DC Comic](#).
- Collectively craft a statement, opinion, or observation about the quote and comic book cover. Encourage students to provide reasoning and support

from Round 1 for their collective statement. Remind students of conversation protocols (consider drawing upon “Let’s Talk!” for support).

- After providing time for this activity, ask groups to select a representative to share their collective statement with the class.

## Synthesize & Reflect

**Guide Students:** Provide time for each group to share their collective statement with the class. Again, document each statement somewhere that is visible or accessible for all students.

- Ask students to view/access each collective statement in their groups to discuss what other groups stated. Ask them to discuss:
  - The validity and/or strength of each statement
  - Whether or not they agree with each statement and why
  - How it may have caused them to edit or improve upon their own group’s statement

**Synthesize:** Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer holds firm that flags around Louisville would be lowered in Ali’s honor around the time of his death. **Consider:**

- Mayor Fischer’s statement
- President Obama’s observation that “it’s very rare that a figure captures the attention of the entire world”
- Pastor Edmund’s belief that “your superhero doesn’t die”
- The Introduction and Round 1: “Shaking Up the World”

*How do these statements demonstrate the impact that Ali had (and continues to have) on the world?* Students should discuss this synthesis question in pairs.

**Exit Slip:** Complete an individual response to the synthesis question above (in italics), ensuring that you’re not just re-writing what you and your partner discussed. This should be a personal response that is reflective of your own thoughts.



# LESSON 2: ROUNDS 2 & 3 - “FLOATING AND STINGING” & “GRAND AVENUE”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Weigh pros and cons before arriving at a solution or consensus.
  - Synthesize my understanding to create meaning.
- We will:
  - Apply creative thinking skills to arrive at several solutions to complex problems.
  - Consider the ways in which a person is influenced by people and surroundings.

## Student Guide

Lesson 2 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

Round 2: “Floating and Stinging” begins with scenes of protest, images from the media, and social unrest in 2016, the year that Ali passed away. Kelly Jones of the Louisville Metro Police Department knew that an influx of people would be arriving in the city from all around the world to pay their respects, and discussed his thinking of how he would secure safety in the city of Louisville while acknowledging the cultural, linguistic, racial, and religious diversity of the people who were soon to arrive.

**Ask Students:** Knowing that managing differences is not always easy, what would your approach be to the challenge Kelly Jones described? Tell students to take note of their responses in the Lesson 2 Student Guide.

Play Round 2: “Floating and Stinging” before moving on to the “Guide and Engage” portion of this lesson.

## Guide & Engage

After playing Round 2, ask students if they have any revisions to their responses to the Opening Activity. Pair students or place them into small groups, giving them clear expectations for how to attend to the following:

- Share Opening Activity responses among group mates
- Discuss pros and cons to the group’s responses
- Attempt to come to consensus on a common approach to a safety plan that acknowledges the diversity of the people coming to Louisville to mourn Ali’s death

Pending how much time you have, you can either solicit a response from each group, or call on a few groups to share. Allow students to respond to the responses presented.

## Explore & Apply

**Explain to Students:** We will be introduced to important places and people in Round 3: “Grand Avenue”. As you watch this section, pay attention to:

- How a person’s surroundings influence who they become
- Who and what Muhammad Ali was influenced by?
- Who and what influences you?
- Who and what do you influence?
- What questions, terms, or ideas do you need to know more about?

Direct students to the Lesson 2 Student Guide to capture their notes.

Play Round 3: “Grand Avenue” before moving on to the “Synthesize and Reflect” portion of this lesson.

## Synthesize & Reflect

After viewing Round 3: “Grand Avenue”, allow students to discuss any and all of their responses to the items in “Explore and Apply”. Depending on the needs and preferences of your students, decide how you want to accomplish response-

sharing (pairs, groups, whole-class). Ensure that safe conversation protocols are followed and reinforced during these conversations.

**Exit Slip:** Alert students that at the end of the time designated for watching and discussing the film, students will engage in an interests-driven project. Direct students to take several moments to reflect on Round 3, and to describe something they want to know more about (or become well-versed in understanding). You could share the following topics, but tell students not to limit themselves to these alone: African American National Anthem; a personal “Red Bike Moment”; patriotism; Alberta Jones; persistence and motivation.

# LESSON 3: ROUND 4 - “THE RENT YOU PAY”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Draft a claim and support it with evidence.
  - Draw connections between the statements and opinions of various people.
- We will:
  - Explore the ways in which a person’s surroundings can influence who they become.
  - Determine how Ali faced criticism for some of his decisions, and how he responded.

## Student Guide

Lesson 3 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Ask Students:** Consider the various identities that define you. Identities can come from your race, sex, gender, religion, culture, membership of a team or club, interests (video games, book genres, music, etc), and much, much more. Some situations allow us to express our identities freely. Others, however, do not. Journal about a time or situation in which you might have to hide your identity, or assimilate to survive or remain safe. Assure students that due to the potentially sensitive nature of their responses, sharing with others will be optional. Tell students to take note of their responses in the Lesson 2 Student Guide.

Invite any students who are willing to share their responses with the class to do so. Remind students of classroom community expectations as they share, again as it relates to the sensitivity of their responses.

## Guide & Engage

**Tell Students:** As we listen to and watch Round 4: “The Rent You Pay”, pay attention to the details surrounding Ali’s conversion to Islam, the public reaction to him doing so, and the ways in which he stood up for himself in the face of public criticism.

Play Round 4: “The Rent You Pay”. Direct students to the Lesson 3 Student Guide to capture their notes.

**Pose to Students:** Did Ali assimilate to the world around him? Explain with examples, reasons, and evidence.

**Guide Students:** Explain to students that they are going to prepare responses to a series of prompts related to Round 4: “The Rent You Pay” so that they can engage in a Gallery Walk activity.

## Explore & Apply

### **Gallery Walk:**

1. Designate 6 spaces within your classroom where you can place extra-large easel paper, such as Post-It Super Sticky Easel paper.
2. Create 6 groups of students and explain to them how a Gallery Walk works. They will begin at their first assigned station, where they will find one of the 6 prompts from the “Guide and Engage” portion of the lesson. Together they will discuss their responses to the prompt, and then a scribe will place their collective response on the easel paper. (Encourage group scribes to keep their handwriting at a size that is readable, but not so large that other groups cannot place their responses on the paper.)
3. Based on how long your class period is, decide how much time is appropriate for groups to spend at each station. Once that time has elapsed, announce that it is time to rotate to the next station.
4. Repeat this until groups arrive at their original stations. At this point, there should be scribed responses from every group on every sheet of paper.
5. Rotate groups through each station once more so that they can see how the entire class responded to each prompt.

- Inform students how many minutes they will spend at each station so that they can manage their time effectively.
- Collectively define group expectations for movement, conduct, and conversation before beginning the Gallery Walk. Remind students of these expectations when you rotate students through stations a second time.

## Synthesize & Reflect

Exit Slip: How does this gallery walk support, strengthen, or refute your thinking? Which, if any, of your responses would you change, and why?

# LESSON 4: ROUNDS 5 & 6 - “MAKING THE DAYS COUNT” & “DOING THE ROADWORK”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Compare and contrast my cultural traditions with those of others.
  - Synthesize the ideas of others to arrive at my own conclusions.
- We will:
  - Discuss how a person can both influence and be influenced by their surroundings.
  - Explore our own inspiration as it relates to the life and legacy of Muhammad Ali.

## Student Guide

Lesson 4 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Tell Students:** Round 5: “Making the Days Count” begins detailing the ways in which the city of Louisville prepared for the week-long “I Am Ali” Festival that concluded with Ali’s memorial service. Reflect on how your family, community, faith affiliation, culture, and/or race honors the passing of a loved one. Describe it in your Lesson 4 Student Guide.

As we watch Round 5: “Making the Days Count”, compare your response with how the city of Louisville celebrated the life of Ali.

After sufficient time has been given for students to reflect, play Round 5: “Making the Days Count”. Direct students to the Lesson 4 Student Guide to capture their comparisons.

Invite a few students to discuss their reflections on honoring loved ones who have passed and how they compare (or contrast) to how the city of Louisville honored the life of Ali.

## Guide & Engage

**Explain to Students:** Muhammad Ali devoted much of his life to service and action. Pastor Ahmaad Edmund is quoted earlier in the film when he reflects on his favorite Ali saying, “Service to others is the rent you pay for the room here on Earth.” We hear this echoed in the words of Louisville poet Hannah Drake in her poem, “Greatest”:

*And our service to others is the rent that we pay for our room on Earth  
Live your life in a way that leaves fingerprints of your existence in this world  
Place footprints on the sands of eternity  
Live a legacy that says, “I was here”.*

**Continue Explaining to Students:** As we move towards the concluding scenes of the film, consider the ways in which Ali’s life, actions, and legacy inspires you as you imagine your future. Our three Driving Questions (How does a person’s surroundings influence who they become? How can a person influence their surroundings? How can we honor someone’s legacy through service and action?) will be the basis upon which you will conduct a mini-research project at the conclusion of the film. As we watch Round 6: “Doing the Roadwork”, begin collecting questions, topics, people, and ideas you might want to explore as they relate to any of the Driving Questions.

Play Round 6: “Doing the Roadwork”. Direct students to the Lesson 4 Student Guide to capture their early ideas for how they will conduct research for their upcoming projects.

## Explore & Apply

**Reflect with Students:** People from all walks of life are featured in “Round 6: Doing the Roadwork” describing both Ali’s impact on their lives, as well as the inspiration they’ve drawn from Ali. This Round demonstrates how Ali’s life and



and legacy transcended languages, religions, races, cultures, and lifestyles, and continues to do so today.

In small groups, ask students to reflect on this Round as it relates to:

- The notes students individually captured in the “Guide and Engage” portion of the lesson
- University of Louisville student Natasha Mundkur’s story
- President of Muslim Americans for Compassion Dr. Muhammad Babar’s comments
- The three Driving Questions: How does a person’s surroundings influence who they become? How can a person influence their surroundings? How can we honor someone’s legacy through service and action?

Remind students of appropriate discussion protocols and expectations, and provide sufficient time for students to converse in their groups. As ideas bubble to the surface that resonate with students, advise them to take note as it relates to refining their research project ideas.

## **Synthesize & Reflect**

**Exit Slip:** How does listening to peers’ responses impact your thinking, understanding, and interpretation of the film? How does it help you refine your ideas as you think about your upcoming research project?

# LESSON 5 - ROUND 7: “SAYING GOODBYE TO THE GREATEST”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Analyze how particular quotes and aspects of *City of Ali* develop meaning.
  - Connect events, ideas, and people.
- We will:
  - Build on each other’s ideas and interpretations of *City of Ali* as we engage in a Fishbowl Socratic Circle.

## Student Guide

Lesson 5 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Remind Students:** In Round 5: “Making the Days Count”, Louisville mayor Greg Fischer reflects on the “I Am Ali Festival”, saying “It was very interesting to me to see the reaction of our African American citizens in Louisville. The gratitude about how the city handled the passing of Muhammad took me off guard, because of course we’re going to do that. But there must have been some question of ‘would the city celebrate the life of Muhammad Ali this way?’”

**Prompt Students:** Based on what you’ve watched and learned up to this point in the film, where might this question have come from? Why might the African American/Black community have been surprised? Why might Mayor Fischer have been taken off guard?

Provide time for students to respond first in their Lesson 5 Student Guide, then facilitate small group discussions so that students can process their answers with peers. Decide how you will solicit responses from the whole class.

## Guide & Engage

**Explain to Students:** After viewing Round 7: “Saying Goodbye to the Greatest”, we will engage in a Fishbowl Socratic Circle, which is an opportunity for you to both pose and respond to questions that students generate for discussion. As you watch, write down questions that you want to bring to the discussion.

Play Round 7: “Saying Goodbye to the Greatest”. Direct students to the Lesson 5 Student Guide to capture their questions.

## Explore & Apply

Preparing for a Fishbowl Socratic Circle:

Space must be made in the classroom so that there is an inner circle and an outer circle. See [here](#) for more detailed steps for organizing a Fishbowl. Explain to students how the process will go, and ask for their input regarding expectations for those who are in both circles.

Students who come to the inner circle must bring their questions with them. The first participant refers to one of their answered questions, and provides their answer for the group. Other students in the inner circle can then choose to respond to the first student, ask the first student to expand, push the first student’s thinking, or present their own answer to one of the questions. They can also ask/answer questions that are not on the question form. The student guide has some quotes from this Round for inspiration.

Depending on how much time you have, you can allow for shorter rotations (~7-10 minutes) of inner circle/outer circle participants to ensure whole-class participation, or you can use this opportunity to model a high-quality fishbowl with more eager participants, allowing reticent students a chance to see what it looks like before they participate.

Challenging as it may be, the teacher does NOT participate in the Fishbowl. They do not offer commentary, nor do they steer the conversation in any one direction

(unless they need to address inappropriate comments). They are just facilitators in the process of organizing the Fishbowl.

Use a visible timer for each rotation of the Fishbowl so that participants can stay on track.

## **Synthesize & Reflect**

**Exit Slip:** Why is it important to listen to multiple perspectives? How can we grow as a critical thinker when we do so? What are some strategies for encouraging people to engage in deeper thinking about a particular topic or concept?

# LESSON 6 - FINAL ROUND: “A BETTER WORLD”

## Learning Targets

- I can:
  - Analyze people’s words and opinions to find common themes among them.
  - Apply the driving questions to different aspects of a speech.
- We will:
  - Reflect on the various perspectives of the people who spoke at Ali’s memorial service.
  - Consider ways in which we can maintain Ali’s legacy in our own lives.

## Student Guide

Lesson 6 Student Guide can be found [here](#). Please make a copy before distributing to students digitally.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Alert Students:** We will be finishing the final round of *City of Ali* today, where you will observe the many well-known people who came to speak at Ali’s memorial service. The crowd that gathers for this service is massive; you’ll soon learn how many people tuned in to watch across the globe. In your student guide, reflect on the following prompt: Why does it often take a person’s death to bring people together? Does it have to be this way? Why or why not?

Solicit responses from a variety of students, then prepare students to watch the Final Round: “A Better World”. Encourage them to pay attention to the personal accounts and stories that people share about Ali and to find the common threads or themes that connect their words.

## Guide & Engage

**Ask Students:** Now that you've listened to the stories of the people who spoke about Ali during the memorial service . . .

- What are the common threads and themes that connect their words?
- How do people's personal stories and memories of Ali humanize him? How do they maintain his status as superhuman?
- People from all walks of life gathered to honor Ali's life. If it's possible for one man to bring everyone together, then imagine the impact that many people living like Ali would have on the world. Is this possible? Why or why not?
- Ali came back to Louisville frequently for small events like fundraisers and school visits. What does this say about his character, especially in light of his abundant pride and self-confidence?
- Louisville Metro Police officer Kelly Jones says, ". . . the sense of peace during that entire week, and it was something you could feel and you could see it. Why can't we figure out how to do that every day?" Why can't we, or how might we?

Present these questions to the whole class, and encourage students to expand on each others' responses. Allow significant time to process them, as students are also processing the entire film at this point. During this process, remind students that if an idea sparks inspiration for their research project, that they need to take note of it in their Student Guide.

## Explore & Apply

Gather students in pairs or small groups. Direct them to their student guides, where they will find an excerpt of Natasha Mundkur's speech that she shared during the memorial service. In their groups, ask them to analyze her words as they relate to the three Driving Questions. For each of the Driving Questions, ask students to discuss how her speech answers each question, and to provide 2-3 other pieces of evidence from the film that support her speech.

After sufficient time has been provided for students to accomplish this task, direct students to work with another pair or group to compare responses.

## Synthesize & Reflect

**Exit Slip:** As the film draws to a close, Louisville mayor Greg Fischer says, “This is something we'll never experience again. You want to hold on to it. You don't want to let it go. It fills you up in such a way that makes you feel human and alive, but it's also transitory. It's passing, it's over, and it's our time to carry it on.” What do you think he means by this? How will you “carry it on”?

## Additional Consideration

Watching the film over a series of days is a different experience from watching it in its entirety. If it is possible within a teacher’s schedule to show students the whole film, they might consider showing it at the conclusion of Lesson 6. Alternatively, they might consider showing it as a celebration at the conclusion of the project.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL: SUMMATIVE STUDENT PROJECTS

These lessons are built to provide a wealth of opportunities for students to process the film, the people and events featured, the themes, and the topics contained within. These opportunities should then afford students sufficient background knowledge to pursue a topic of their choosing for research. There are no specific lessons built to facilitate how a teacher guides students through the project phase of their learning, but below you will find a list of the resources that have been designed to support the project.

- [Project Overview](#)
  - Objectives
  - Directions
  - Resources
  - Timeline
  - Final Product Options
  - Assessment Guide



# HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLANS

## Lesson Description & Overview

These lessons have been designed to correspond to the rounds in which *City of Ali* is organized. Each lesson requires the students to watch a particular round or set of rounds immediately following the Opening Activity before engaging in the remainder of the lesson.

- Before beginning this unit of lessons with your students, please ensure that you have fully reviewed the **Viewing Guide** found on **page 8** of this booklet. It will allow you to get ahead of some points in the movie that require some forewarning or additional preparation for conversation.
- It is strongly recommended that you review and employ strategies from the Learning for Justice publication *Let's Talk!* before, during, and after instruction. More information about this resource can be found in **Appendix B** on **page 76** of this booklet.
- There are formative assessments built into the lessons by way of opening activities, journal prompts, group tasks, and exit slips. However, it is strongly recommended that the teacher design additional opportunities to formatively assess progress towards mastery of the content standards if they perceive a need to do so.
- These lessons are designed to support students as they engage in a research project once they have processed each round of the film. This project should be considered a summative assessment, not an option. If a teacher prefers a different approach, then it is strongly recommended that they design a different summative assessment, as students deserve an opportunity to demonstrate the skills and concepts that they have mastered.
- While lessons contained herein have been designed for use at the high school level, classroom educators should pay special attention to the nuanced differences in expectation as standards scale from Grades 9-10 to Grades 11-12. Adjustments may need to be made to instruction, materials, and/or assessments for each student to properly engage with the standards at an appropriate level.

## Driving Questions

1. How are we influenced by our community and environment?
2. How can an individual positively influence their community or environment?
3. What would our community look like if we used love as a vehicle to reach liberation?

## Standards Addressed

### Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing

#### *Reading Informational Text 9-10*

- RI.9-10.1: Cite relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.9-10.3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events over the course of a text, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed and the connections that are drawn between them.
- RI.9-10.5: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs or larger portions of a text.
- RI.9-10.7: Analyze various accounts of a subject presented in different print and non-print formats, determining which details are emphasized in each account.

#### *Reading Informational Text 11-12*

- RI.11-12.1: Cite relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events, and explain how specific individuals, ideas or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- RI.11-12.5: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument.
- RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different print and non-print formats in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### *Composition 9-10*

- C.9-10.5: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### *Composition 11-12*

- C.11-12.5: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## **Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies**

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for SS, Inquiry: Questioning*

- HS.C.I.Q.1: Generate compelling questions to frame thinking, inquiry and/or understanding of key civics concepts.
- HS.UH.I.Q.1: Generate compelling questions to frame thinking, inquiry and/or understanding of key concepts in U.S. history.

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for SS, Inquiry: Using Evidence*

- HS.C.I.UE.1: Evaluate the credibility of multiple sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.
- HS.C.I.UE.2: Gather information and evidence from credible sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.
- HS.UH.I.UE.1: Evaluate the credibility of multiple sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.
- HS.UH.I.UE.2: Gather information and evidence from credible sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.

### *Kentucky Academic Standards for SS, Inquiry: Communicating Conclusions*

- HS.C.I.CC.2: Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

- HS.UH.I.CC.2: Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.

### Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices

- View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary, and transformational.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others, and the world.
- Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
- Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.
- Apply high-level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about the text.

### Social Justice Standards Addressed

- **Justice**
  - JU.9-12.12: I can recognize, describe and distinguish unfairness and injustice at different levels of society.
  - JU.9-12.14: I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages I have in society because of my membership in different identity groups, and I know how this has affected my life.
- **Action**
  - AC.9-12.19: I stand up to exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, even when it's not popular or easy or when no one else does.
  - AC.9-12.20: I will join with diverse people to plan and carry out collective action against exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, and we will be thoughtful and creative in our actions in order to achieve our goals.

## **Affirming Racial Equity Tool**

- **Content Integration**
  - Students will be presented with positive representations of social activists from various points in United States history that will provide them with a balance of Mirrors and Windows into the experiences of others. Depending upon the focus of their research project, some students may

also seek to explore activism from other countries to capture global perspectives and understandings.

- **Knowledge Construction**

- Throughout the lessons within this series, students will be given informational texts to build off the various Rounds with *City of Ali* to build upon prior knowledge and extend the argumentation of the film. Through their engagement with the secondary materials, students will analyze and discuss bias, oppression, and privilege as it relates to systemic racism. Depending upon the focus of their research project, some students may explore instances of systemic racism which are still impacting their city. In Louisville, Kentucky this could include food deserts and the lasting impact of redlining on wealth distribution.

- **A.R.E. Through Assessment**

- This series of lessons will conclude with an inquiry-driven student research project that will seek to channel students' personal interest in our guiding questions and texts to synthesize their understanding and present it to a real audience. Embedded in the lesson outline are activities that will assist the teacher in a co-creation of a grading rubric, which will ensure student choice and voice in the completion of these lessons and students' mastery of the target standards.

## **Backpack of Success Skills**

- **Prepared and Resilient Learner**

- Demonstrates knowledge of content skills and standards
- Applies content knowledge to real-world contexts and in interdisciplinary ways

- **Globally and Culturally Competent Citizen**

- Demonstrates compassion and empathy toward others
- Promotes a sense of belonging for others

- **Emerging Innovator**

- Asks questions to extend, challenge and clarify the thinking of self and others

- Applies a design process (e.g. research, ideation, modeling, prototyping and testing) to create new solutions, products and processes
- Uses relevant information and feedback to continually improve solutions, products and processes
  
- **Effective Communicator**
  - Uses appropriate conventions and evidence to convey ideas clearly
  - Uses technology effectively and responsibly
  
- **Productive Collaborator**
  - Works effectively with diverse groups to accomplish a common goal
  - Gives and receives meaningful feedback
  - Actively listens to understand others' ideas and perspectives

# LESSON 1: LIBERATION & LEGACY

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Analyze how particular quotes and aspects of *City of Ali* develop meaning.
  - Connect events, ideas, and people.
- I will . . .
  - Build on each other's ideas and interpretations of *City of Ali* as we engage in a Fishbowl Socratic Circle.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

Writing Into the Day Prompt: Liberation is defined as the act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression. Consider the [image](#) below then answer the following questions: How would you define social liberation? Who are individuals or collectives that honor, fight for, or uphold your personal idea of social liberation? Be prepared to share your ideas with an elbow partner before we debrief as a whole group.

Display the linked image in a highly visible place for students to accompany the above prompt.

## Guide & Engage

Once students have had the opportunity to engage in conversation to debrief their Writing Into the Day with an elbow partner, begin a formalized [Think-Pair-Share](#) with the whole group. Facilitate a classroom discussion, emphasizing that students should utilize [Talk Moves](#) while addressing the whole group. As students discuss, capture key phrases and words somewhere easily visible to students, such as a whiteboard. To close the activity, ask the group to co-create a single definition that can be referenced and utilized within the group moving forward. Leave the co-created definition in visible space for the remainder of the lesson.

**Teacher Tip:** If Talk Moves are a new idea within your classroom community, consider the ["They Say"/"I Say"](#) resource featured within *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents* by Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle. Alter and expand to suite your students' needs.

## Explore & Apply

Introduce the informational article ["Why Are We Obsessed with Superheroes?"](#) by ABC News from CommonLit to students. Permit students sufficient time to read and fully annotate the article. Encourage them to make text connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world) to those raised by their Writing Into the Day and class discussion. Once students have completed their annotations, debrief the article as a whole class. Below are some guiding questions.

- What does the article claim about superheroes?
- The article argues that Superman acted as a metaphor for the Jewish immigrant experience. Using that logic, what metaphors might be present in other superheroes?
- What makes a hero?
- Can everyday actions be considered heroic?

## Synthesize & Reflect

Once students have completed their whole group, ask each student to share out about individuals and/or collectives that uphold the shared definition of liberation with an elbow partner.

**Exit Slip:** Consider our class discussions and our Writing Into the Day prompt. On the back of your article, write a summary of the article in which you state whether you agree with or refute the article's claims. Provide your own definition of what a hero/heroine is.

**Teacher Tip:** Constraining the length of student writing can focus thinking and provide succinct responses with higher levels of clarity. For example, consider making this a 3-5 sentence summary rather than leaving it open for student determination.



# LESSON 2: INTRODUCTION & ROUND 1

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Create inferences about *City of Ali* and its focus based on a quote from Muhammad Ali.
  - Discuss our text connections to compare and contrast our ideas of a hero with the life of Muhammad Ali.
- I will . . .
  - Defend my inferences to an elbow partner.
  - Cite textual evidence from *City of Ali* to support my inferences.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** Our film opens with the following quote from Muhammad Ali: “I wish people would love everybody the way they love me. It would be a better world.” Regardless of your knowledge of Muhammad Ali, what do you think he meant when he said this? Based on this quote, create 3 inferences regarding Ali's life and legacy and/or our film. Be prepared to share your ideas with an elbow partner before we debrief as a whole group.

## Guide & Engage

Once students have had the opportunity to engage in conversation to debrief their Writing Into the Day with an elbow partner, begin a formalized Think-Pair-Share with the whole group. Facilitate a classroom discussion, emphasizing that students should utilize Talk Moves while addressing the whole group. Then play the Introduction and Round 1 “Shaking Up the World” (0:00 - 13:45).

**Directions for Students:** As you watch the Introduction and Round 1, pay attention to details and quotes that support or refute your inferences. Make note of these details and quotes alongside your Writing Into the Day.

At the close of the viewing, permit students time to share their observations and

thoughts with their elbow partner prior to moving on to the “Explore & Apply” portion of this lesson.

## Explore & Apply

Present to Students: Former President Barack Obama is featured, saying “It’s very rare that a figure captures the attention of the entire world.”

- What metaphors are associated with Muhammad Ali?
- Based on the Introduction and Round 1, do we have enough information to fully understand how Ali rose to worldwide celebrity status?
- Who else in history has risen to this global status? How and why does this happen?
- What questions do you have about his life at this point? What more do we need to know to better answer these questions?

Teacher Tip: Take note of student responses to the last two questions somewhere that is visible or accessible for all students. Consider utilizing Post-It Notes to permit students to self-report their thinking in Parking Lot space around your physical classroom that students can later explore.

## Synthesize & Reflect

The notating, sharing, and thinking skills that students have completed in “Guide & Engage” as well as “Explore & Apply” of this lesson will be transferred to create a Double Entry Journal throughout the remainder of the film. To practice this personal and reflective writing, students will complete the prompt below to close out the lesson.

Exit Slip: Consider our classroom definition of liberation. Adjacent to your Writing Into the Day, answer the following questions. In what ways did Muhammad Ali uphold our shared idea of what liberation looks like? By your own definition, was Muhammad Ali a hero? Explain your response.

# LESSON 3: ROUNDS 2 & 3

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Connect previous discussions of heroes, heroines, and heroism to our cultural identities.
  - Discuss the intersection of family, friends, community, and self as it relates to identity formation and influences of and on our actions.
- I will . . .
  - Cite key events, ideas, phrases, and quotes from our film.
  - Write analysis of those items that includes text connections, my initial reactions, and my own thoughts about the content of our film.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** Liberation is defined as the act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression. Consider the [image](#) below then answer the following questions. How would you define social liberation? Who are individuals or collectives that honor, fight for, or uphold your personal idea of social liberation? Be prepared to share your ideas with an elbow partner before we debrief as a whole group.

Display the linked image in a highly visible place for students to accompany the above prompt.

## Guide & Engage

Once students have had the opportunity to engage in conversation to debrief their Writing Into the Day with an elbow partner, begin a formalized Think-Pair-Share with the whole group. Facilitate a classroom discussion, emphasizing that students should utilize Talk Moves while addressing the whole group. As students discuss, capture key phrases and words somewhere easily visible to students, such as a whiteboard. To close the activity, ask the group to search for commonalities in their opinions and viewpoints. Then ask if heroes are born or made.

## Explore & Apply

Before beginning Round 2 and 3 (13:46 - 28:50), connect students' answers about whether heroes are born or if they are made to the general concept of nature versus nurture. Preface this portion of the film with the clear information that Rounds 2 and 3 cover concepts of political and social upheaval, protests, and racial trauma and violence. Introduce the [Double Entry Journal](#) with the scaffold of the guiding questions below.

- How are we influenced by our family and our community? By our environment?
- Who and what Muhammad Ali was influenced by? Who and what did Muhammad Ali influence?
- Who and what influences you? Who and what do you influence?

## Synthesize & Reflect

After viewing Round 3, allow students to discuss any and all of their responses to the items in "Explore & Apply." Depending on the needs and preferences of your students, decide how you want to accomplish response-sharing (pairs, groups, whole-class). Ensure that safe conversation protocols are followed and reinforced during these conversations (consider drawing upon "Let's Talk!" for support).

**Exit Slip:** Alert students that at the end of the time designated for watching and discussing the film, students will engage in an interest-driven, inquiry project. Tell students to take several moments to reflect on the Introduction and first 3 Rounds, and create a question they would like to find an answer to. Share the following themes, but tell students not to limit themselves to these alone: activism in athletics, cultural identity, cultural legacies, equity, heroes and heroines, identity formation, liberation, policing, racial identity formation, racism, redlining, service, and social change.

**Teacher Tip:** While the students are discussing whether in pairs, groups, or the whole class, provide all students with 3 Post It notes to capture their questions. Direct them to place them in a physical space in the classroom to return to in

your final Lesson prior to student projects beginning.

# LESSON 4: THE ROLE OF ACTIVISM IN LEGACY

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Connect *City of Ali* and Ali’s Olympic experience to those of other activist athletes.
  - Revisit and -- as needed -- rewrite our definitions of liberation and heroes.
- I will . . .
  - Compare and contrast 2021 experiences of Black and Brown athletes to those of Ali.
  - Defend my opinion through proper argumentation.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** Today, we will begin class by listening to [“Olympic Pressure and How Black Athletes Balance Being Applauded Yet Feared,”](#) a 5-minute interview of Harry Edwards, a sociologist, conducted by Ari Shapiro of NPR. During the interview, Shapiro states the following, “So you describe top-tier Black athletes, Black Olympians, as carrying the aspirations of Black America, the fears of white America, the expectations of both. How does that tie into the broader Black American experience beyond Olympians?” As we listen, formulate an answer to his question, citing text evidence as you are able.

## Guide & Engage

Direct students to extend their thinking from Writing Into the Day by responding to the following writing prompt.

**Extension Prompt:** Much of our interview seems to discuss the concept of duality, or the instance of opposition or contrast between two aspects of something. In this instance, being both cheered and feared as a Black Olympian. Journal about a moment when you have experienced or witnessed duality as it

relates to identity. Know that, due to their likely personal nature, no one will be expected or required to share out vocally.

## Explore & Apply

Before moving forward, highlight what the class has shown prior knowledge of regarding Muhammad Ali and other activist athletes of his era. If time permits, consider co-creating a list in a highly visible space for students to reference for the remainder of the lesson. Then watch [“The History of Black Protest in Sports”](#) (14:14) from The New Yorker.

This video should be previewed by each classroom educator before showing it to any class of students. At no point should this video be utilized if a classroom educator believes it could cause harm or trauma to students of color. Classroom educators who are unfamiliar with the concept of [curricular violence](#) are encouraged to educate themselves prior to this lesson.

## Synthesize & Reflect

In the video, Harry Edwards states, “African Americans are very much willing to accept what the first stanza of the song has become. But they also insist that we live up to it.” Edwards is referencing The Star-Spangled Banner by Frances Scott Key. The video lingers on the lyric, “O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?” Have students discuss whether or not all Americans are free and what freedom means to them. Again, ensure that safe conversation protocols are followed and reinforced during these conversations (consider drawing upon “Let’s Talk!” for support).

**Exit Slip:** Provide each student with a single Post-It note. Ask each student to argue whether all Americans are or are not free and why. Clarify that they are only being allotted the space on a single Post-It to defend their stance.

**Teacher Tip:** Depending on the handwriting, some students may only be able to fit 1-2 sentences on their Post-It notes. To add an additional challenge, restrict the number of words a student is permitted to utilize as they construct their mini-arguments.

# LESSON 5: ROUND 4

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Create a claim and support it with textual evidence.
  - Draw connections between the opinions and statements of various people.
- I will . . .
  - Explore the ways in which an individual's community can influence who they become.
  - Reflect on how Ali faced criticism for some of his decisions and how he responded.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** Identity is both intersectional and multifaceted. Consider the [image](#) below and the various identities that define you. Then journal about a situation in which you might have to conceal your identity, or assimilate to the expectations of a dominant identity group to fit in, remain safe, or survive. Know that, due to their likely personal nature, no one will be expected or required to share out vocally. At the close of their writing time, invite any students who are willing to share their responses with the class to do so. Remind students of classroom community expectations as they share, again as it relates to the sensitivity of their responses.

Display the linked image in a highly visible place for students to accompany the above prompt.

## Guide & Engage

Before beginning Round 4 (28:51 - 41:02), direct students to note the details surrounding Ali's conversion to Islam, the public reaction to him doing so, and the ways in which he stood up for himself in the face of public criticism. As needed, provide additional copies of the [Double Entry Journal](#) to students. At the



close of the viewing, permit students time to share their observations and thoughts with their elbow partner prior to moving on to the “Explore & Apply” portion of this lesson.

## Explore & Apply

**Present to Students:** Reverend Charles Elliott states, “When Cash changed his name to Muhammad Ali, I really didn’t like it, and I had him to know I didn’t like it but [...] you know, everybody got their own belief.”

- How are Ali’s religious beliefs presented to the audience? Is his conversion to Islam presented in a positive, negative, or unbiased manner? Provide text evidence that supports your responses.
- How did Ali’s community impact his decisions? How did Ali’s rise to global fame influence his convictions?
- How are Ali’s detractors presented by the film and those interviewed within it?

## Synthesize & Reflect

**Exit Slip:** On the lined side of their Double Entry Journals, have students construct a general argument about the film or Muhammad Ali. Encourage them to draw upon all class discussions, co-created artifacts and definitions, and facts gleaned from their previous lessons to source text evidence. At the close of their condensed argument, require students to identify a single theme that their argument focuses upon. These will be later tied back to the questions students generated in Lesson 3.

# LESSON 6: ROUNDS 5 & 6

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Compare and contrast my cultural traditions with those of others.
- I will . . .
  - Explore my own inspiration as it relates to the life and legacy of Muhammad Ali.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** In the upper right box on [Charting Comparisons](#), reflect upon how your community, culture, faith, family, and/or race honors the passing of a loved one. This reflection can be bulleted out or structured in a short paragraph. At the start of the class, acknowledge that some students may be less forthcoming than others due to an aversion to death or recent trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Permit students sufficient time to write, and then ask for students who are willing and able to share about their customs, rituals, and traditions. Direct all students to make notes regarding those responses in the lower right box on Charting Comparisons.mage in a highly visible place for students to accompany the above prompt.

## Guide & Engage

Direct students to extend their thinking by responding to the following writing prompt on the lined side of Charting Comparisons.

**Extension Prompt:** During Round 5, “Making the Days Count,” begins detailing the ways in which the city of Louisville prepared for the week-long “I Am Ali” Festival that concluded with Ali’s memorial service. In Round 1, Louisville author Hannah Drake stated, “One of the very first thoughts I had was, I hope we honor him correctly.” Based on what you have learned thus far, journal about how you would have sought to honor Muhammad Ali, had you been permitted to do so. Know that, due to their likely personal nature, no one will be expected or

required to share out vocally, but that we will revisit this writing at the close of today's lesson.

## Explore & Apply

Play Rounds 5 and 6 (41:03 - 52:49).

**Directions for Students:** As we watch Rounds 5 and 6 of City of Ali, utilize Charting Comparisons to write down things you notice or reflect upon as it relates to how Muhammad Ali was celebrated and remembered in the city of Louisville.

At the close of the viewing, permit students time to share their observations and thoughts with their elbow partner prior to moving on to the "Synthesize & Reflect" portion of this lesson.

## Synthesize & Reflect

People from all walks of life are featured in "Round 6: Doing the Roadwork" describing both Ali's impact on their lives as well as the inspiration they've drawn from Ali. This Round demonstrates how Ali's life and legacy transcended cultures, languages, lifestyles, races, and religions, and continues to do so today. To close out the lesson, encourage students to complete the Exit Slip while considering these key ideas and moments.

- The notes students individually captured during the "Opening Activity" portion of the lesson.
- University of Louisville student Natasha Mundkur's story.
- President of Muslim Americans for Compassion Dr. Muhammad Babar's comments.
- The three Driving Questions of the Unit:
  - How are we influenced by our community and environment?
  - How can an individual positively influence their community or environment?
  - What would our community look like if we used love as a vehicle to reach liberation?

**Exit Slip:** Consider the entirety of your Charting Comparisons including your contributions, those of your classmates, and the information gleaned from City of Ali in addition to your Journal Response. Once again, you are going to be challenged to extend your thinking to consider legacy, liberation, and love. How best can we honor the artistry, compassion, and spirit of individuals such as Muhammad Ali?

# LESSON 7: THE ROLE OF LOVE IN LIBERATION

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Define the term “love” and discuss what it means as a concept.
  - Compare and contrast “love” with our understanding of liberation.
  - Complete a [Gallery Walk](#) to explore the ideas of great orators and great classmates.
- I will . . .
  - Discuss and defend my personal understanding of what liberation and love are and how they intersect.
  - Critique the strength of my peers’ stances on their own understandings.
  - Write a condensed argument to present my understanding of our lesson.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

**Writing Into the Day Prompt:** At the onset of this mini-unit, you were asked to define liberation. Today, you are being challenged to consider the role of compassion, empathy, and love in our shared definition of liberation. Consider the [short video](#) produced by Bernice King, daughter of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and CEO of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. As we listen, formulate an answer to the following questions. How might Bernice King define the type of love she is speaking about in her video? How does her definition of love relate to our co-created definition of liberation? Be prepared to share your ideas with an elbow partner before we debrief as a whole group.

## Guide & Engage

Once students have had the opportunity to engage in conversation to debrief their Writing Into the Day with an elbow partner, begin a formalized Think-Pair-Share with the whole group. Facilitate a classroom discussion, emphasizing that

students should utilize Talk Moves while addressing the whole group. As students discuss, project [Image Prompt 1](#) and [Image Prompt 2](#) for this lesson. To close the activity, ask the students to share out whether they feel there is a right or wrong answer to the first question from our Writing Into the Day prompt, defending their arguments with text evidence.

## Explore & Apply

Utilizing chart paper, display at least 8 of the [quotes on liberation](#) around your physical classroom space. Purposefully group students then permit them to circulate in small groups to complete a [Gallery Walk](#). During Round 1, as they read and discuss the quotes in their small groups, encourage students to write analysis, connections, extensions, and push back for each one. Then circulate each group through the remaining stations, encouraging students to read the original quote, and respond to a classmate's thinking. All students and groups should end at the same chart paper where they began.

## Synthesize & Reflect

**Exit Slip:** Direct students to argue for which quote most closely aligns with the class-created definition of liberation by crafting a single-sentence summary on a Post-It note.

**Teacher Tip:** Encourage students to select a quote they connect with deeply, as this can be utilized to brainstorm artifacts and questions during Lesson 10 for their summative project. Have students hang Post-It notes above the chart paper for later reference by subsequent classes. If this lesson carries to a second day, students can be permitted to explore those rationales if time allows.

# LESSON 8: ROUND 7 & THE FINAL ROUND

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Analyze how particular quotes and aspects of *City of Ali* develop meaning.
- I will . . .
  - Build on the ideas and interpretations of *City of Ali* presented by my classmates as we engage in a Socratic Seminar.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

Writing Into the Day Prompt: Patriotism is defined as devotion to and vigorous support for one's country. Consider the [image](#) below then answer the following questions. Was Muhammad Ali a patriotic person? Did he inspire others, especially Black and Brown Americans to be patriotic? Be prepared to share your ideas with an elbow partner before we debrief as a whole group.

Display the linked image in a highly visible place for students to accompany the above prompt.

## Guide & Engage

Once students have had the opportunity to engage in conversation to debrief their Writing Into the Day with an elbow partner, begin a formalized Think-Pair-Share with the whole group. Facilitate a classroom discussion, emphasizing that students should utilize Talk Moves while addressing the whole group. Then play the Round 7 and the Final Round (52:50 - 1:17:04). Provide students with a second (or third) copy of the [Double Entry Journal](#). At the close of the viewing, permit students time to share their observations and thoughts with their elbow partner prior to moving on to the “Explore & Apply” portion of this lesson.

## Explore & Apply

In Round 7, University of Louisville Professor Brandon McCormack stated, “What's beautiful about Ali's brand of patriotism to me is that it was less about an idealized version of Loving America, an idea and much more about the kind of patriotism that was really loving. All Americans.” Similarly, in the Final Round, Louisville author Hannah Drake stated, “I love America because in my heart, I know what America can be. I saw it that week.” Utilizing one of the two quotes, walk students through the process of moving analysis and reflection generated by a Double Entry Journal to question formation. Provide scaffolding with the guiding questions below.

- What does it mean to be patriotic in 2021 America?
- Does patriotism look different across different social groups?
- Does patriotism look different amongst racial groupings?
- What do you believe America can be?

## Synthesize & Reflect

Ahead of student projects, all students will participate in a Socratic Seminar. Socratic Seminars are not teacher centered and instead place the locus of control in the hands of students. Today's exit slip will work to generate questions for the following lesson.

**Exit Slip:** Spend the last 5-8 minutes of class revisiting our artifacts from this mini-unit. Collect 6-10 questions that have been generated by you and/or your peers and write them down on the lined side of your Double Entry Journal. Make sure you bring back your work to utilize during tomorrow's Socratic Seminar.



# LESSON 9: SOCRATIC SEMINAR

## Learning Targets

- We will . . .
  - Analyze our ideas and opinions to find common themes among them.
  - Apply the driving questions to different aspects of our Socratic Seminar.
- I will . . .
  - Reflect on the various perspectives of the people who were cited in *City of Ali*.
  - Consider ways in which we can maintain Ali's legacy in our own lives.

## Opening Activity/Guiding Purpose/Independent Practice

Begin the class by reviewing classroom community expectations and Talk Moves expected during a [Socratic Seminar](#). Remind students that they are encouraged to facilitate discussion and rely on you as little as possible.

## Guide & Engage

Remind students of the 3 driving questions of the mini-unit, encouraging them to circle back to them throughout the class period to generate shared answers.

- How are we influenced by our community and environment?
- How can an individual positively influence their community or environment?
- What would our community look like if we used love as a vehicle to reach liberation?

## Explore & Apply

Permit students to engage in a Socratic Seminar, interrupting only when absolutely necessary to correct students who intentionally or unintentionally break classroom community expectations.

## Synthesize & Reflect

**Exit Slip:** Via Flipgrid, reflect on your growth and learning during this mini-unit and provide your own personal answers to our 3 driving questions, providing as much textual evidence as you can.

**Teacher Tip:** If time does not permit this exit slip as well as a formal ending of the Socratic Seminar, this item can instead be used as an Opening Activity the following day.

# HIGH SCHOOL: SUMMATIVE STUDENT PROJECTS

The lessons within this mini-unit are built to provide a wealth of opportunities for students to process the film, the people and events featured, the themes, and the topics contained within. These opportunities should then afford students sufficient background knowledge to pursue a topic of their choosing for research. There are no specific lessons built to facilitate how a teacher guides students through the project phase of their learning, but below you will find a list of the resources that have been designed to support this project. It is suggested to begin by revisiting the questions generated in Lesson 7 and student's initial responses in Lesson 9 to form a shared listing of possible research questions.

- [Project Overview](#)
  - Objective
  - Directions
  - Guidelines for Completion
  - Project Components
  - Single-Point Rubric

# EXTENSIONS OF LEARNING

Below, teachers will find six activities that are built to extend the learning as it relates to watching and analyzing City of Ali. This content can be scaffolded across grade levels, and suggestions for doing so are detailed for each activity. These are not formatted as lessons, as a teacher can decide how they would like to incorporate them into the learning progression. Teachers are encouraged to use these extensions of learning as they see fit.

## Activity One: Myth Versus Reality

**Description:** Muhammad Ali continually returned to Louisville, Kentucky for various events. His wife Lonnie said, “When you’re part of the family, you’re not a myth. You’re real. And he was real here [Louisville].” Ask students to compare and contrast the Superman comic image with LeRoy Neiman’s artwork with any image of him looking like an everyday person.

- [Superman Comic Image](#)
- [LeRoy Nieman’s Artwork](#)
- [White, Ali, Washington, Clay, and Three Calvin Family Members Photograph](#)
- [Muhammad Ali Holds a Microphone at Louisville Downs](#)
- [Muhammad Ali with Four Children Photograph](#)

**Middle School Considerations:** Begin by conducting this activity with the entire class so that the teacher can model a successful comparison. Select from the images linked above to begin. Depending on the time and resources available to students, they could be encouraged to research more images of Ali.

**High School Considerations:** Utilization of this activity can act as a grounding introduction to consider any of the questions below in more formalized lessons or can inspire or lead to individual student projects.

- How does fame impact social portrayals of individuals?
- Are portrayals of famous individuals authentic? How?
- How do portrayals of famous individuals compare and contrast to how we might represent ourselves? (Consider various social media platforms.)

## Activity Two: The Black National Anthem

**Description:** In Round 3: Grand Avenue, Alice Houston reflects on life as a young Black woman living in Louisville’s West End. “It was just a wonderful environment in which to grow up. We had the best and the brightest teachers. We recited the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution. We said the Pledge of Allegiance. We sang the national anthem, but we also sang what became known as the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing . . . reaffirming our African American experience while also emphasizing the importance of patriotism at the same time.” Spend time finding the lyrics to this song, it’s various meanings and interpretations, and its significance in the Black community. See Appendix B for supportive resources.

- [Lift Every Voice and Sing: The History, the Lyrics and the Impact](#)
- [‘Black National Anthem’ Makes Its Debut at the NFL](#)

**Middle School Considerations:** This interactive webpage highlighting the Black National Anthem allows students to hover over a particular lyric to learn more about the meaning. This webpage could be shared to initiate this activity, which might spur independent student research following exploration.

**High School Considerations:** In September of 2021, the National Football League (NFL) began playing the “Lift Every Voice and Sing” at the start of each football game. Have students consider the impact of its inclusion on the Black community, Black and Brown NFL players, and Black and Brown athletes who identify as activists. This activity can inspire or lead to individual student projects.

## Activity Three: Ali's Running Path

**Description:** Childhood neighbor and friend Lawrence made note of Ali's exercise routine as a youth, saying, "I worked at night with the US Postal Service and when I get off at 7:00 o'clock in the morning, he'll be running up and down the street in his boxing gear. He would run down to Chickasaw Park every morning and run back home before going to school. Lawrence, I'm gonna be heavyweight champion of the world one of these days. I said 'boy you crazy.'" Map Ali's run using the details below. What are you willing to do with as much devotion and routine as Ali gave to his morning runs? Describe in detail.

- Ali's childhood address: 3302 Grand Avenue, Louisville, KY 40211
  - [Ali's Childhood Home](#)
- Chickasaw Park address: 1200 Southwestern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40211
  - [Chickasaw Park](#)

**Middle School Considerations:** Provide the above websites for students to allow them a deeper understanding of Ali's childhood home, neighborhood, and the history of Chickasaw Park.

**High School Considerations:** Statistically, few high school student athletes will continue to play at the collegiate level with even fewer continuing to play in what would be considered professional sports. In April of 2020, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) published [data](#) that provides concrete data to articulate this idea. Have students consider not only the devotion but the literal time commitment to athletic routines for a young person to become a professional athlete. This activity can inspire or lead to individual student projects.

## Activity Four: 88,000 Rose Petals & the Fermi Style

**Description:** In Round 6: Doing the Roadwork, florist Maggie Cassaro tells viewers how many rose petals they needed (88,000) to scatter in front of Cave Hill Cemetery. Ask students: How many petals does an average rose have? How many would be needed to accomplish what the florist wanted to do? To solve this problem creatively, introduce students to scientist and mathematician Enrico Fermi, who was deeply interested in applying mathematical principles to solving math problems that we do not have exact answers for. See the webpage below for more information about Fermi and how to approach these seemingly impossible questions.

- [30 Fermi Problems for Students and Teachers -- Innovative Teaching Ideas | Teaching Resources](#)

**Middle School Considerations:** After watching the explanatory video contained within the link above, practice thinking through one of the sample questions on the website before thinking through the questions listed in the description above.

**High School Considerations:** Have students co-construct additional questions from City of Ali that can be addressed through mathematical principles. This activity can inspire or lead to individual student projects.

## Activity Five: 88,000 Rose Petals & the Fermi Style

**Description:** As with most movies, City of Ali received reviews once it was released. American film critic Roger Ebert provided his commentary, as did Ben Kenigsberg of the New York Times. Read and compare reviews with students. Ask students to compare and contrast each review, and then analyze the arguments contained within each review for effectiveness, support, and impact. Finally, ask students to provide their own review of the movie using effective argument techniques.

- [City of Ali Movie Review & Film Summary](#) (2021) (Roger Ebert)
- [‘City of Ali’ Review: A Final Round for a Champ](#) (Ben Kenigsberg)

### **Middle School Considerations:**

- [How to Write a Movie Review: 5 Tips for Writing Movie Reviews - 2021](#)

**High School Considerations:** Examine this guide with students after reviewing the task. Consider having students share their work with a real-world audience. Consider both local and student publications for their work.

- [9 Tips for Writing a Film Review](#)



## **Activity Six: Larger Than Life**

Description: The worldwide audience tuning in for Ali's televised memorial service was 1 billion strong. Considering the world population, that is nearly an eighth. That does not include those who physically attended the memorial, nor does it include those who didn't tune in. Ask students, are there other people in history who have captured the attention and awareness of the world to this degree? Who might they be? How did they achieve this fame?

There is no need to provide grade band-specific scaffolds for this activity.

## Activity Seven: Essay Prompt

**Description:** These essay prompts can be used in any secondary classroom; as educators know their students best, please consider what necessary scaffolding needs to occur to make them understandable and something a student feels confident that they could address in their writing. If an educator intends to formally assess their students' responses to any one of these prompts, please consider creating or co-creating a [single-point rubric](#) to address the expectations of their final submission.

### Introduction

The film opens with the following quote from Muhammad Ali: "I wish people would love everybody the way they love me. It would be a better world."

- **Ask Students:** Regardless of your knowledge of the life and achievements of Muhammad Ali, what do you think he meant when he said this? What predictions might this quote lead you to develop about the film, Ali's life, or otherwise?

### Round 1: Shaking Up the World

Billy Crystal says, "Only once in 1000 years or so do we get to hear a Mozart or see a Picasso or read a Shakespeare. Ali was one of them."

- **Ask Students:** These people are creators of art, literature, and music. Of what was Ali a creator? In what ways was he different from and similar to individuals such as Mozart, Picasso, and Shakespeare?

### Round 2: Floating and Stinging

Louisville Metro Police Office Kelly Jones remarks on what he needed to consider ahead of an enormous amount of diverse individuals flooding the city to pay respects to Muhammad Ali. This was in the midst of political and social upheaval, violence, protests, and murders of people of color. "I wasn't afraid of these people. What I was afraid of was causing an international incident. What are the specific cultures and educations that I as a commander, need to hurry up and learn and how is this going to shake out? And how do we make sure that we do it right for our city?"

- **Ask Students:** How might leaders of other departments, businesses, and institutions value a multicultural approach to decision making? Discuss a specific instance where this approach would lead to a more empathetic and

positive outcome for those involved.

### Round 3: Grand Avenue

American journalist Davis Maraniss addressed the “myth” that Ali tossed his Olympic medal in the Ohio River upon returning home to a segregated hometown. “It was mythology that when he came back he was so upset by being mistreated that he threw his gold medal into the Ohio River. Didn't happen but it did emotionally. That says something about how he felt about some of the way he's being treated here but it also represented the contradictions of America.”

- **Ask Students:** What were those contradictions? What contradictions still exist today?

### Round 4: The Rent You Pay

Bill Plaschke remarks on Ali's conversion to Islam and his subsequent name change. “Uh- the older people in my family and elsewhere. A lot of them never called him Ali. They still called him Cassius Clay to their dying day.”

- **Ask Students:** What are some issues or topics that today's older generations react to negatively or hesitantly but that today's youth embraces? (Examples: Attire, career choices, gender pronouns and roles, social media, etc).

### Round 5: Making the Days Count

A guest at the Ali Center is interviewed during the week leading up to Ali's memorial service. She reflects, stating that, “I think the greatest tribute to Muhammad Ali is the fact that he was a humanitarian and the things that he did for people. The sports is great, but, his true legacy will be what he's done in order for people to embrace humanity.”

- **Ask Students:** Are we (or are you) living up to Ali's legacy of embracing humanity? Argue why or why not, with sufficient reasons and evidence.

### Round 6: Doing the Roadwork

University of Louisville graduate Natasha Mundkur reflects extensively on the personal impact Ali made on her life, both as a young child and into her young adult years. “My freshman year of college, I started volunteering part time with the Muhammad Ali Center. I was working with their youth programs. On a Tuesday after his passing, one of my bosses said, ‘Ok, so we want you to speak at his memorial service,’ and I said, ‘Oh wait, what do you mean you want me to speak, like the one that's, you know, at the Yum! [Center]?’, and she's like, ‘Yeah,

the one at the Yum! Center. We want you to speak.”

- **Ask Students:** Amidst all of the well-known people featured in the Final Round who came to speak at Ali’s memorial service, Ms. Mundkur was also chosen to speak. Although not famous, nor had she ever met Ali, why do you believe she was chosen to speak?

#### Round 7: Saying Goodbye to the Greatest

Lonnie Ali’s words close out this round poignantly. “As we face uncertainty in a world and divisions at home, Muhammad's life provides useful guidance. America must never forget that when a cop and an inner-city kid talk to each other, then miracles can happen.”

- **Ask Students:** Lonnie could have chosen many words to describe the importance of Ali meeting police officer and Columbia Gym boxing coach, Joe Martin, but she chose the word “miracle.” Discuss this word choice, why you believe she chose it, and what we can infer about her beliefs regarding Ali’s formative years.

#### Final Round: A Better World

Rasheda Ali Walsh leaves viewers with an ethereal image to complement the conclusion of City of Ali. “My father had a recurring dream. He said, ‘I used to dream that I was running down Broadway in downtown Louisville and all of the people were gathered in the street waving at me and clapping and cheering my name. I waved back. Then all of a sudden I just took off flying.’”

- **Ask Students:** This quote is shared at the beginning of City of Ali, and it concludes the film. To include it in both places indicates that it is important in some way. Why is it so significant? What details from the film suggest that his recurring dream came true?

The background of the slide is white, decorated with numerous orange butterfly silhouettes of various sizes and orientations, scattered across the page. The text is centered and reads:

**“Service to others is the  
rent you pay for your room  
here on earth.”**

**Muhammad Ali**

# APPENDIX A

## Ali Center Resources

Description: The items linked below can be found on the Ali Center website.

- [Ali's Biography](#)
- [Collections and Archive](#)
- [Digital Museum](#)
- [Image Gallery](#)
- [Timeline of Ali's Life](#)
- [More to Explore](#)

## Hometown Heroes

Description: In Louisville, citizens honor those who call Louisville their hometown and have made an impact on the world. Muhammad Ali, of course, is no exception. See below for more information.

- [Hometown Heroes: Muhammad Ali](#)

# APPENDIX B

## Let's Talk!

**Description:** Let's Talk! is a publication from Learning For Justice that offers classroom-ready strategies you can use to plan discussions and to facilitate critical conversations with your students so that they can skillfully engage with a variety of topics.

## Social Justice Standards

**Description:** From Learning for Justice, the Social Justice Standards “are a road map for anti-bias education at every stage of K–12 instruction. Comprised of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes, the Standards provide a common language and organizational structure educators can use to guide curriculum development and make schools more just and equitable.” (Learning for Justice, 2018).

## Affirming Racial Equity Tool

**Description:** The ARE Tool should be at the center of all lesson and unit planning that goes on in your building. It ensures that all teachers are working to meet the expectations of the JCPS Racial Equity Policy that pertain to Diversity in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. It also ensures that all teachers are engaging in pedagogy and practices that support anti-biased and anti-racist education, so that we are moving as a district towards racially equitable and sustaining teaching.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching Templates

**Description:** These templates have been designed to encompass the various expectations for lesson and unit planning within JCPS, as they attend to content and interdisciplinary standards, Deeper Learning, and the ARE Tool. They have been designed for K-12 use across all content areas.

## [Black National Anthem](#)

**Description:** This resource contains the lyrics to the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, as well as brief background information and a performance.

## Middle School Student Guides

**Description:** These student guides have been designed to accompany lessons 1-6 of the Middle School unit. Educators should print or make copies of these items so as to not alter the original files.

- [Lesson 1](#)
- [Lesson 2](#)
- [Lesson 3](#)
- [Lesson 4](#)
- [Lesson 5](#)
- [Lesson 6](#)

## Middle School Project Links

**Description:** These resources have been designed to support the successful implementation of the project that acts as a summative assessment for the entirety of the Middle School unit of lessons.

- [Project Overview](#)
- [Peer Evaluation: Presentations](#)
- [Time Slot Sign-Up Form](#)

## HS Lesson & Project Links

**Description:** These resources have been curated and designed to support the successful implementation of the lesson plans and summative project for the entirety of the High School unit.

- Lesson 3 [Double Entry Journal](#)
- Lesson 6 [Charting Comparisons](#)
- Lesson 7 [Concepts of Liberation \(Gallery Walk\)](#)
- [Project Overview](#)



The background of the page is filled with numerous orange butterfly silhouettes of various sizes and orientations, scattered across the white space. The butterflies are stylized, showing the outlines of their wings and bodies.

**“I am the greatest, I said  
that even before I knew I  
was.”**

**Muhammad Ali**

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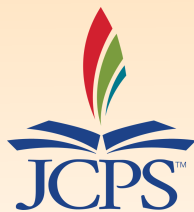
# Muhammad Ali

January 17th, 1942 - June 3rd, 2016



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