

# NEWS BREAK

**Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, June 5, 2016 of The Seattle Times e-Edition for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

**Article: Muhammad Ali: Why champ was 'the greatest' (Main, A1)**

## Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

- **What is your prior knowledge about Muhammad Ali? What have you heard or read about him?**

**Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.**

A. bigotry	1. in a way that is neatly skillful and quick in movement
B. brash	2. the human race; human beings collectively
C. deftly	3. move out of or away from something and come into view
D. emerge	4. the aspect of someone's character that is presented to or perceived by others
E. fame	5. self-assertive in a rude, noisy, or overbearing way
F. humanity	6. having or showing sharp powers of judgment; astute
G. persona	7. a person who can endure pain or hardship without showing their feelings or complaining
H. shrewd	8. absolutely necessary or important; essential
I. stoic	9. intolerance toward those who hold different opinions from oneself
J. vital	10. the condition of being known or talked about by many people, especially on account of notable achievements

## Comprehension

1. What did Cassius Clay change his name to?
2. The stoic generation that had fought World War II returned home to raise children who became defined by what three characteristics?
3. Outside the ring, the court fight over Ali's refusal to fight in the Vietnam War cost him \_\_\_\_\_ years at the peak of his career but earned him respect among the growing number of people turning against the war.
4. His conversion to Islam, with his abandonment of the birth name Cassius Clay, tested the deepness of Americans' support for \_\_\_\_\_, five decades before a presidential candidate talked openly about banning Muslims from coming to the United States.
5. In a civil-rights era when many Americans still denied the very humanity of black men, Ali became what?
6. Ali's transcendent force — his comic bravado, physical beauty and insistence on being the master of his own story — made him the athlete most favored by whom?
7. Ali traveled to Zaire in 1974 for his "Rumble in the Jungle" against who?
8. His legacy is captured in songs and prose that span decades. Author David Maraniss, who wrote about Ali in "Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed the World," called him a "gift to writers because he offered so many themes". What were the 5 themes?
9. Ali's fight against Foreman, and the odd conditions under which it was fought, became the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary, "When We Were Kings." In 2001, actor \_\_\_\_\_ starred in a Hollywood story of the boxer's life, "Ali."
10. Ali inspired songs from around the world. John Lennon borrowed Ali's "\_\_\_\_\_ catchphrase as the title for a song that he gave to Ringo Starr.
11. The 1977 biopic "The Greatest" was soon forgotten, but not the theme song later immortalized by Whitney Houston, "\_\_\_\_\_."
12. What musical artists refer to Ali in their lyrics?

## Additional Activities

*For a generation that came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, Ali was far more than a boxer. With a personality that could deftly dance and connect politics and entertainment, activism and athletics, his identity blended boundaries. He was an entertainer, a man at the center of swirling political and cultural change, a hero — and a villain — to many for his brash self-assuredness. "Part of Muhammad's greatness was his ability to be different things to different people," retired basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar wrote Saturday on Facebook.*

*"To sports fans he was an unparalleled champion of the world, faster and smarter than any heavyweight before. To athletes, he was a model of physical perfection and shrewd business acumen. To the anti-establishment youth of the 1960s, he was a defiant voice against the Vietnam War and the draft. To the Muslim community, he was a pious pioneer testing America's purported religious tolerance. To the African-American community, he was a black man who faced overwhelming bigotry the way he faced every opponent in the ring: fearlessly."*

- Is there a modern day star or athlete that would compare to Ali? Why?

***“One of the reasons the civil-rights movement went forward was that black people were able to overcome their fear,” HBO host Bryant Gumbel told Ali biographer Thomas Hauser. “And I honestly believe that, for many black Americans, that came from watching Muhammad Ali. He simply refused to be afraid. And being that way, he gave other people courage.”***

- This is a powerful statement—do you agree with Gumbel’s quote? Why or why not?

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### **Answer Key to Vocabulary**

- A. 9
- B. 5
- C. 1
- D. 3
- E. 10
- F. 2
- G. 4
- H. 6
- I. 7
- J. 8

### **Answer Key to Comprehension Questions**

1. Muhammad Ali
2. Rebelliousness, impatience & an unwillingness to accept things the way they were.
3. 3 ½ years
4. Religious freedom
5. One of the most recognizable people on Earth.
6. Singers, intellectuals, filmmakers and other artists and entertainers.
7. George Foreman
8. Bravery. Pride. Humor. Blackness. Universality.
9. Will Smith
10. “I’m the Greatest”
11. The Greatest Love of All
12. Rappers Jay Z, Kanye West, Nas, Common and Will Smith