

STUDY GUIDE:
Students & Educators

Atlantic for Kids presents

AND IN THIS CORNER: CASSIUS CLAY

by Idris Goodwin
directed by Reggie D. White

Heather Baird
Director of Education

Tyler Easter
Education Manager



ATLANTIC FOR KIDS

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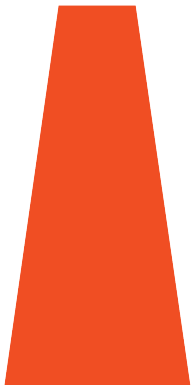
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SECTION I: THE PLAY

Synopsis

Director's Note

Themes



SYNOPSIS

At the sound of the bell, young Cassius Clay Jr. takes his first step into the ring and starts becoming the man the world would know as Muhammad Ali. This swift, vibrant historical drama bobs and weaves through the iconic boxer's early life in Jim Crow-era Louisville. An unlikely hero is a classic story, but *And in This Corner ...* goes an extra, exhilarating round by exploring how remarkable communities help to create them.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Cassius' story is very much a superhero's journey to becoming an American icon, but it is also the journey of a young boy learning the many ways in which racism is a bigger foe than any opponent in a boxing ring. In the long journey to defeating racism and other forms of systemic oppression, *And in This Corner* shines a light on the life of a young black boy growing up in 1950's Kentucky. From segregated restaurants to the ugliest of racial slurs being hurled at him, this play frames those issues while zooming in on the personal, human toll they take. While the play doesn't shy away from the ugliness of racism, including the use of the most explosive word in American race relations, it reminds us of just how far we've come, while also encouraging us all to do more.

THEMES

Overcoming Obstacles
Taking a Stand
Activism
Perseverance
Civil Rights
Words Have Power
Courage

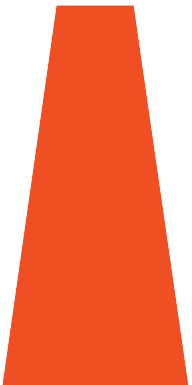
SECTION II: THE CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Creative Biographies

Characters/Cast List

Behind the Scenes Look

Drawing Cassius Clay: The Illustrations



CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

IDRIS GOODWIN (*Playwright*) is an award-winning break-beat poet, playwright, and director of The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College. He was recently named a 2021 United States Artist Fellow. In addition to the recently released poetry collection *Can I Kick It?*, he's had several publications from Haymarket Books including *Inauguration* co-written with Nico Wilkinson, *Human Highlight: Ode To Dominique Wilkins*, and the play *This Is Modern Art* co-written with Kevin Coval. He's appeared on Nickelodeon, HBO Def Poetry, "Sesame Street," NPR, BBC Radio, and the Discovery Channel. His plays include *And in this Corner: Cassius Clay*, *How We Got On*, *Hype Man*, and *This is Modern Art*.

REGGIE D. WHITE (*Director*) is a New York based multidisciplinary art-ivist whose acting credits include NYTW, The Public Theater, 59E59, Arden Theatre, Berkeley Rep, and La Jolla Playhouse. As a director, his work has been featured at The Public Theater, Atlantic Acting School, NY Winterfest, Bay Area Children's Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, AlterTheatre Ensemble, and more. He is an alumnus of Atlantic Acting School, where he now serves as a faculty member and the Artistic Director of Student Productions. He is also an associate artist with Merrimack Repertory Theatre, a recipient of the TBA TITAN Award, the TCG Fox Fellowship, and is a company member of The Williams Project, a living wage theatre company. He is also co-writing a play with Lauren Gunderson and is the co-host of the comedy podcast, "What's The Tea?". reggiedwhite.net

CHARACTERS/CAST LIST



Danté Crichlow
Rudy/Ensemble



Sinclair Daniel
Odessa/Ensemble



Langston Darby
Corky/Sugar Ray
Robinson/Ensemble



Anthony Holiday
Eddie/Young
Soapbox
Guy/Ensemble



Franck Juste
Cassius Clay



**Jacquelyn
Landgraf**
Ringside
Announcer/
Ensemble



Eric Lockley
Cash/Fred
Stoner/Ensemble



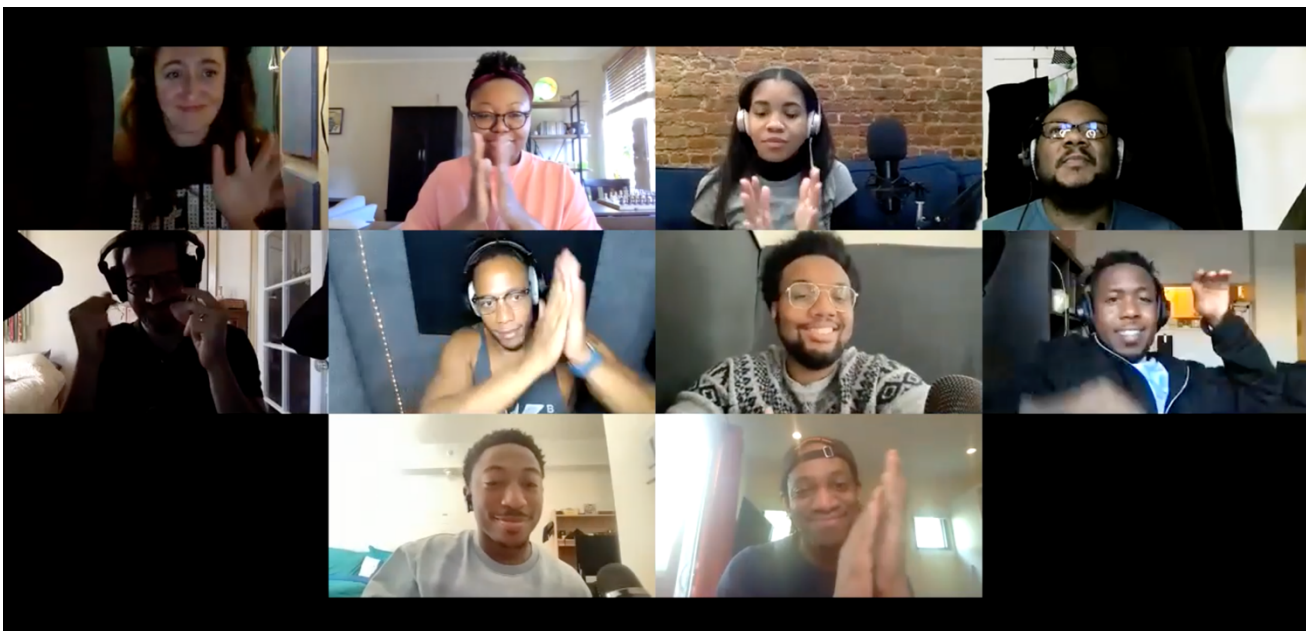
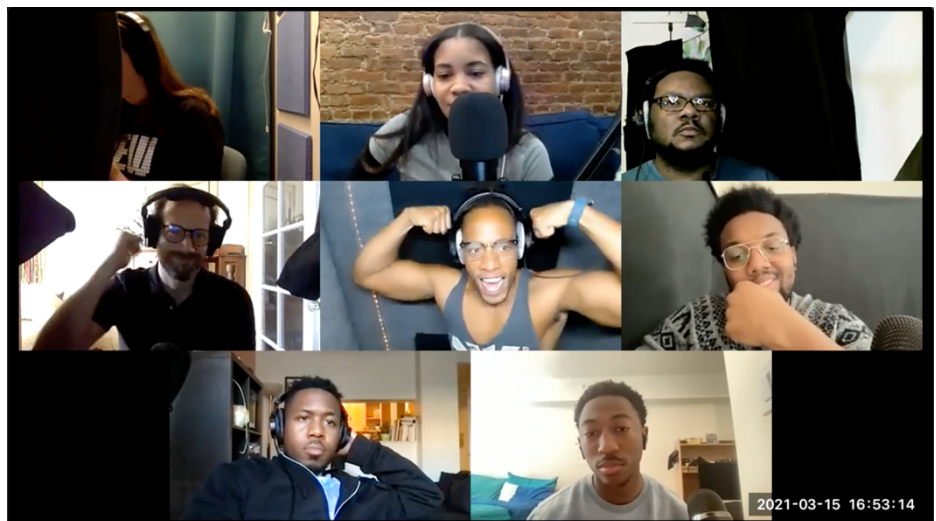
Andy Schneeflock
Joe
Martin/Ensemble

BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK: RADIO PLAY

REHEARSAL

Like most everyone in the last year, our actors have become very familiar with the software Zoom. All of our rehearsals and recording sessions took place virtually, allowing everyone to work safely in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you can see and will hear when you listen to the show, working remotely didn't stop our cast from developing a strong ensemble. And had a lot of fun along the way.



DRAWING CASSIUS CLAY: THE ILLUSTRATIONS

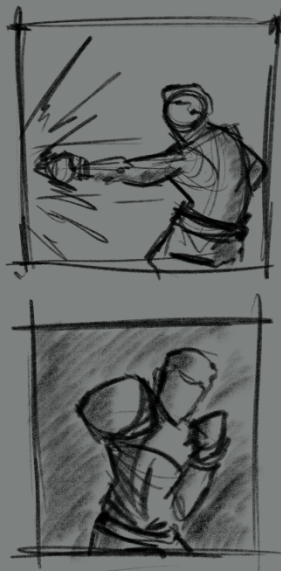
For our radio play adaptation of *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*, the Artistic team sought the talents of designer and illustrator, Christopher O'Neal to help bring the radio drama to life through a series of illustrations. Because we've chosen to present *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay* episodically, Christopher created images that captured the overall theme or atmosphere of each "episode." On the next page are some of his working drafts as he developed the final artwork, which you'll see in the video format presentation of the show:



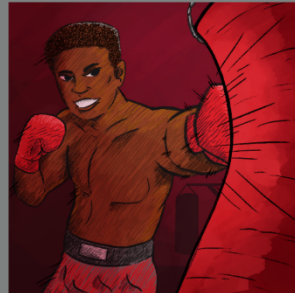
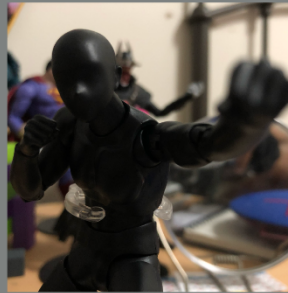
CHRISTOPHER O'NEAL. A New York-based graphic designer turned illustrator, Christopher has gone from designing logos to using his love of character design in animation and film to create more character-led work. Prior to illustration Christopher has worked with brands such as Billy!, Bloomingdales, and D'ussé Cognac. @C.Ryandraw

Cassius Episode #1

Illustration: Christopher O'Neil

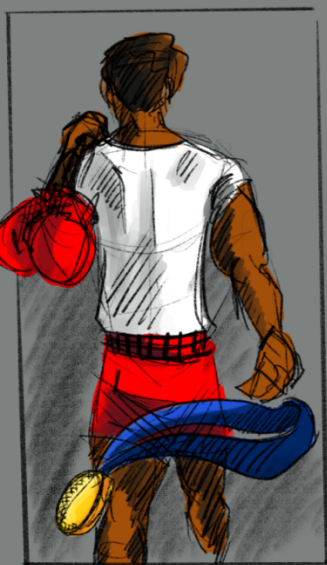


first draft of episode 1.
Here I wanted to capture
the fighting spirit of Cassius and
who he'll become. The direction
did change and became an inspiration
for episode 2.



Episode #4

I took heavy inspiration from Luke Cage #001. In this issue Luke
is abandoning his old look for a new modern look. I used this
to tell Cassius's story of leaving his hometown and becoming
a legend.



Colore DeLeon



Amal



Romy sheke

SECTION III: YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Theater Vocabulary

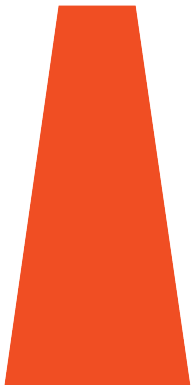
Radio Play Vocabulary

And in This Corner: Cassius Clay Vocabulary

From Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali

The Jim Crow South (Emmett Till, Freedom Riders)

Athletes as Activists



THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

OVERTURE: An orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition.

GHOST LIGHT: An electric light that is left energized on the stage of a theater when the theater is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark.

PROLOGUE: A separate introductory section of a literary or musical work.

VOICE OVER: A piece of narration in a movie or live performance, not accompanied by an image of the speaker.

And in This Corner: Cassius Clay, is being presented as a radio play:

RADIO PLAY (RADIO DRAMA): A dramatized, entirely acoustic performance with no visual component. A radio play/drama depends on dialogue, music, and sound effects to help the audience imagine the story, setting, characters, etc.

REPRISE: A repeated passage in music.

NARRATOR: A person who delivers a commentary accompanying a movie, broadcast, piece of music, etc.

CURTAIN CALL: The appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience's applause.

FICTION: Literature in the form of prose, especially short stories and novels, that describes imaginary events and people.

CHARACTERS: Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

ENSEMBLE: A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

DIALOGUE: The exchange of speech between two characters that reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

MONOLOGUE: A speech by one actor on stage that is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

CHARACTER ARC: The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

MOOD: The overall feeling the play evokes.

COSTUME: The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

PROP: Objects used by an actor to enhance their character. For example, wine glasses at a bar for drinks.

SET: The constructed environment of a play within which the action takes place.

SOUND: Noises and music used in the play.

RADIO PLAY VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To be able to discuss radio play/drama through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the most effective way to discuss radio plays and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

AUDIO MIX: The overall feeling the play evokes.

FOLEY: Producing and reproducing sound and sound effects to add to a production after it has been recorded to enhance the atmosphere and the audio quality.

SOUND DESIGNER: A job in the theater: It is the person who is responsible for creating and producing every sound an audience member hears during a production. This includes sound effects and even the way the audience hears the performers' voices.

SOUND EFFECT: Any sound you hear in a production other than performers' live voices and music. Sound effects are artificially produced and help set the scene and atmosphere of a production.

SOUND ENGINEER: A job in the theater: The person who is responsible for balancing and adjusting the actual sources of the sounds the sound designer creates (places and arranges the speakers, microphones, etc. in accordance with the designers' vision). The sound engineer and designer work closely to create and mix every sound you hear during a production.

SOUNDSCAPE: The combination of sounds that create an overall environment for a production. The soundscape is not just the combination of

sounds, but the audience's perception of the environment created by all of the sound elements of a production combined.

AND IN THIS CORNER: CASSIUS CLAY

VOCABULARY

ACCOMMODATIONS: A temporary place to stay.

AMATEUR: A person who engages in something, usually a sport, before they become a paid professional.

BARRAGE: A great amount of something that happens quickly and continuously.

FUNDAMENTALS: Being or forming the foundation of something. Basic, essentials.

SIT IN: When a person or a group of people occupy a place as a form of protest. Usually in an effort to create political, social, or economic change. They usually occupy the place until their demands are met or they are forcibly removed.



Students holding a sit-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, 1960, to protest laws forbidding them to be served at that lunch counter.

FROM CASSIUS CLAY TO MUHAMMAD ALI

From History.com:

Muhammad Ali (1942-2016) was an American former heavyweight champion boxer and one of the greatest sporting figures of the 20th century. An Olympic gold medalist and the first fighter to capture the heavyweight title three times, Ali won 56 times in his 21-year professional career. Ali's outspokenness on issues of race, religion and politics made him a controversial figure during his career, and the heavyweight's quips and taunts were as quick as his fists. Born Cassius Clay Jr., Ali changed his name in 1964 after joining the Nation of Islam. Citing his religious beliefs, he refused military induction and was stripped of his heavyweight championship and banned from boxing for three years during the prime of his career. Parkinson's syndrome severely impaired Ali's motor skills and speech, but he remained active as a humanitarian and goodwill ambassador.

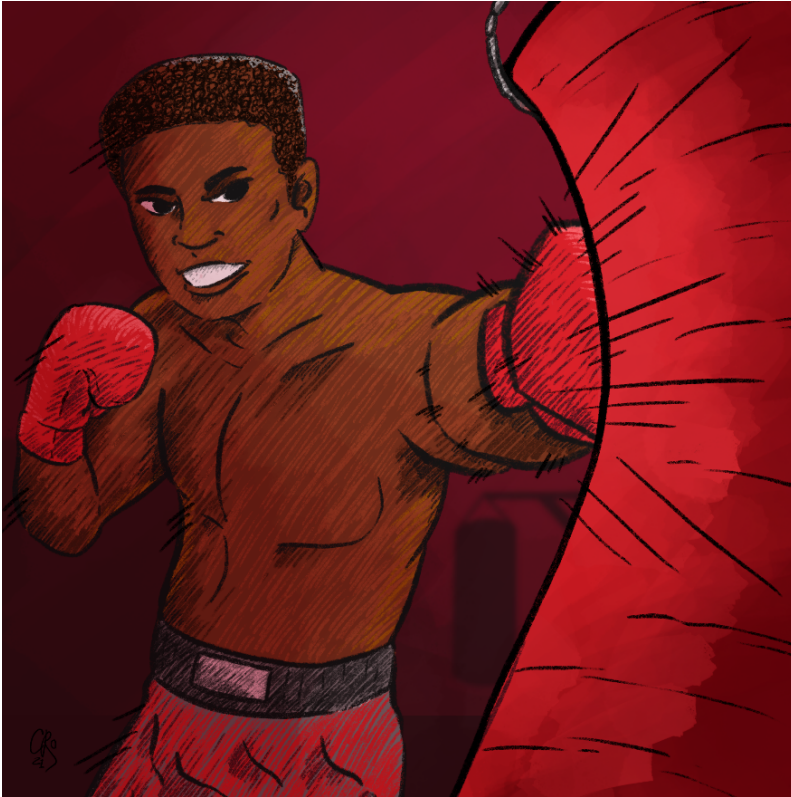
Muhammad Ali's Early Years and Amateur Career

Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., the elder son of Cassius Marcellus Clay Sr. (1912-1990) and Odessa Grady Clay (1917-1994), was born on January 17, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky. It was a red-and-white Schwinn that steered the future heavyweight champion to the sport of boxing. When his beloved bicycle was stolen, a tearful 12-year-old Clay reported the theft to Louisville police officer Joe Martin (1916-1996) and vowed to pummel the culprit. Martin, who was also a boxing trainer, suggested that the upset youngster first learn how to fight, and he took Clay under his wing. Six weeks later, Clay won his first bout in a split decision.



By age 18 Clay had captured two national Golden Gloves titles, two Amateur Athletic Union national titles and 100 victories against eight losses. After graduating high school, he traveled to Rome and won the light heavyweight gold medal in the 1960 Summer Olympics.

Clay won his professional boxing debut on October 29, 1960, in a six-round decision. From the start of his pro career, the 6-foot-3-inch heavyweight overwhelmed his opponents with a combination of quick, powerful jabs and foot speed, and his constant braggadocio and self-promotion earned him the nickname “Louisville Lip.”



Muhammad Ali: Heavyweight Champion of the World

After winning his first 19 fights, including 15 knockouts, Clay received his first title shot on February 25, 1964, against reigning heavyweight champion Sonny Liston (1932-1970). Although he arrived in Miami Beach, Florida, a 7-1 underdog, the 22-year-old Clay relentlessly taunted Liston before the fight, promising to “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” and predicting a knockout. When Liston failed to answer the bell at the start of the seventh round, Clay was indeed crowned heavyweight champion of the world. In the ring after the fight,

the new champ roared, “I am the greatest!”

At a press conference the next morning, Clay, who had been seen around Miami with controversial Nation of Islam member Malcolm X (1925-1965), confirmed the rumors of his conversion to Islam. On March 6, 1964, Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad (1897-1975) bestowed on Clay the name of Muhammad Ali.

Ali solidified his hold on the heavyweight championship by knocking out Liston in the first round of their rematch on May 25, 1965, and he defended his title eight more times. Then, with the Vietnam War raging, Ali showed up for his scheduled induction into the U.S. Armed Forces on April 28, 1967. Citing his religious beliefs, he refused to serve. Ali

was arrested, and the New York State Athletic Commission immediately suspended his boxing license and revoked his heavyweight belt.



Convicted of draft evasion, Ali was sentenced to the maximum of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, but he remained free while the conviction was appealed. Many saw Ali as a draft dodger, and his popularity plummeted. Banned from boxing for three years, Ali spoke out against the Vietnam War on college campuses. As public attitudes turned against the war, support for Ali grew. In 1970 the New York State Supreme Court

ordered his boxing license reinstated, and the following year the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction in a unanimous decision.

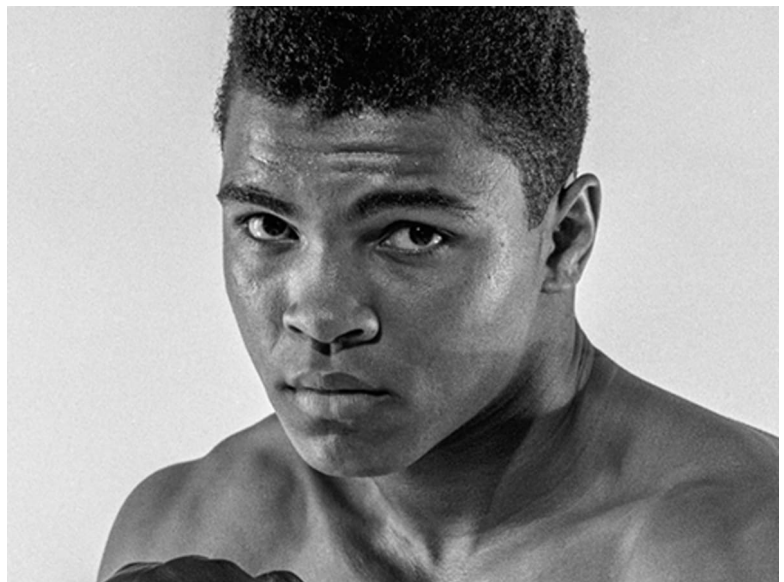
Muhammad Ali's Return to the Ring

After 43 months in exile, Ali returned to the ring on October 26, 1970, and knocked out Jerry Quarry (1945-1999) in the third round. On March 8, 1971, Ali got his chance to regain his heavyweight crown against reigning champ Joe Frazier (1944-2011) in what was billed as the "Fight of the Century." The undefeated Frazier floored Ali with a hard left hook in the final round. Ali got up but lost in a unanimous decision, experiencing his first defeat as a pro.

Ali won his next 10 bouts before being defeated by Ken Norton (1943-). He won the rematch six months later in a split decision and gained further revenge in a unanimous decision over Frazier in a non-title rematch. The victory gave the 32-year-old Ali a title shot against 25-year-old champion George Foreman (1949-). The October 30, 1974, fight in Kinshasa, Zaire, was dubbed the "Rumble in the Jungle." Ali, the decided underdog, employed his "rope-a-dope" strategy, leaning on the ring ropes and absorbing a barrage of blows from Foreman while waiting for his opponent to tire. The strategy worked, and Ali won in an eighth-round knockout to regain the title stripped from him seven years prior.

Ali successfully defended his title in 10 fights, including the memorable "Thrilla in Manila" on October 1, 1975, in which his bitter rival Frazier, his eyes swollen shut, was unable to answer the bell for the final round. Ali also defeated Norton in their third meeting in a unanimous 15-round decision.

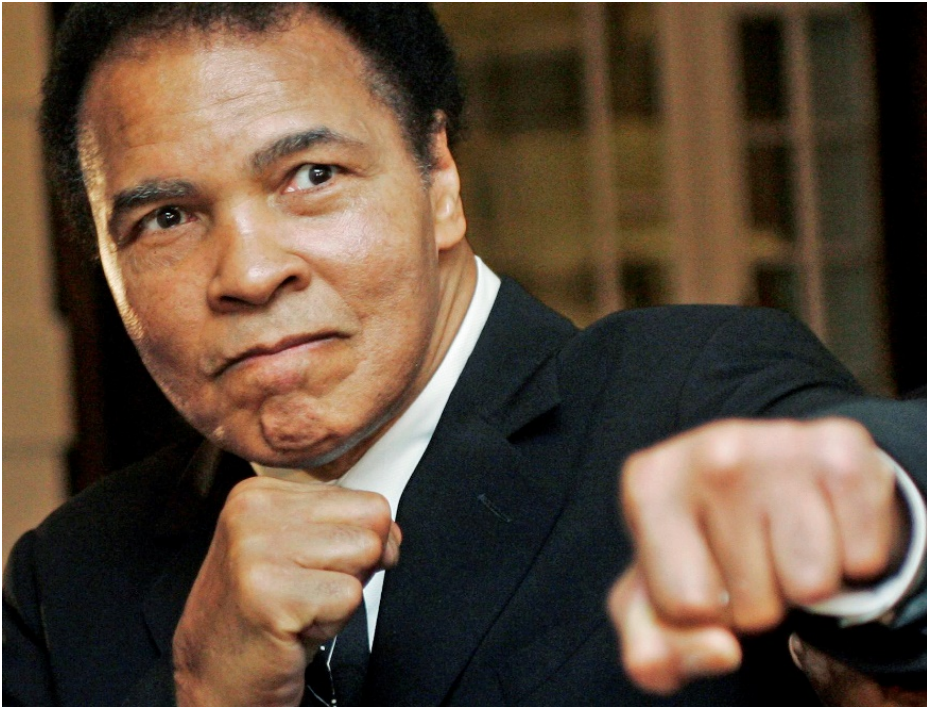
On February 15, 1978, an aging Ali lost his title to Leon Spinks (1953-) in a 15-round split decision. Seven months later, Ali defeated Spinks in a unanimous 15-round decision to reclaim the heavyweight crown and become the first fighter to win the world heavyweight boxing title three times. After announcing his retirement in 1979, Ali launched a brief, unsuccessful comeback. However, he was overwhelmed in a technical knockout loss to Larry Holmes (1949-) in 1980, and he dropped a unanimous 10-round decision to Trevor



Berbick (1954-2006) on December 11, 1981. After the fight, the 39-year-old Ali retired for good with a career record of 56 wins, five losses and 37 knockouts.

Muhammad Ali's Later Years and Legacy

In 1984 Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson's syndrome, possibly connected to the severe head trauma suffered during his boxing career. The former champion's motor skills slowly declined, and his movement and speech were limited. In spite of the Parkinson's, Ali remained in the public spotlight, traveling the world to make humanitarian, goodwill and charitable appearances. He met with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein (1937-2006) in



1990 to negotiate the release of American hostages, and in 2002 he traveled to Afghanistan as a United Nations Messenger of Peace.

Ali had the honor of lighting the cauldron during the opening ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. In 1999 Ali was voted the BBC's "Sporting Personality of the Century," and Sports Illustrated named him "Sportsman of the Century."



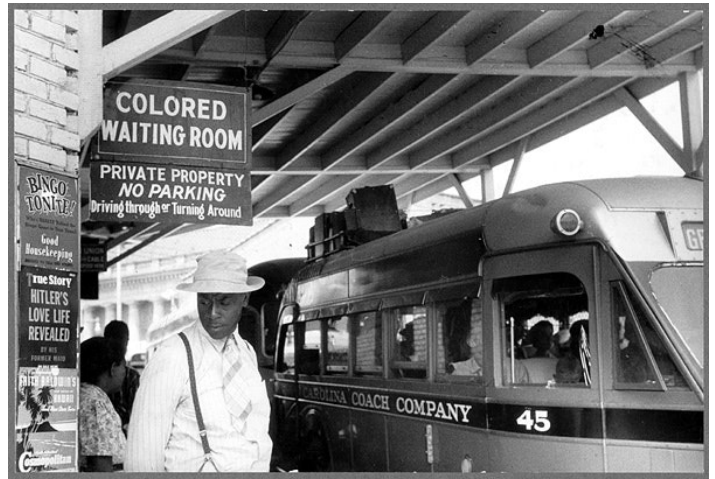
Ali was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a 2005 White House ceremony, and in the same year the \$60 million Muhammad Ali Center, a nonprofit museum and cultural center focusing on peace and social responsibility, opened in Louisville.

Ring Magazine named Ali “Fighter of the Year” five times, more than any other boxer, and he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1990. Ali has been married four times and has seven daughters and two sons. He married his fourth wife, Yolanda, in 1986. Ali died at the age of 74 on June 3, 2016.

THE JIM CROW SOUTH

Ali faced far greater opponents outside the boxing ring than in.

Jim Crow laws were a series of federal, state, and local laws in the US from 1876-1965 that mandated racial segregation in all public places, meaning white people and Black people were not allowed to use the same facilities and services. This included schools and hospitals, seats on buses and other public transportation, even water fountains in public places.



privileges than black people and creating disparities in every element of life.

Many Jim Crow laws are well known because they are associated with education and transportation (because of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the activist, Rosa Parks). However, Jim Crow laws even segregated hospitals, military service, and the criminal justice system. And because all police officers, judges, and stewards of the criminal justice system in these places were white, Black people had no legal avenues to fight against these laws. The penalty for



violating one of these laws often resulted in severe and overly harsh punishment, and even lynching.

Lynching is a type of violence in which a mob attacks and kills a person, supposedly because the person committed a crime or other offense. The execution happens outside the legal system, without a trial, the presentation of evidence, or the defense of the accused. No judge or jury makes a decision on the person's guilt or innocence. Instead, the people in the mob are vigilantes, meaning they decide themselves to enact what they call justice. The victim of the lynching—who may or may not have actually committed a crime—is typically hanged.

Emmett Till

In the play, one of the characters reads an article about an eighth grade student, Emmett Till. Emmett Till was a real young man who was accused of whistling at a white woman named Carolyn Bryant. After this accusation was made, Roy Bryant, Carolyn's husband, and his brother, J.W. Milam, went to Emmett Till's house, took him from his bed, tortured, and lynched him. They left his body in a river. Emmet's mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, insisted that Emmett's funeral have an open casket. She wanted the public to see exactly what had happened to her son. The men who killed Emmett went to trial, but in front of an all white jury, they were acquitted (found not guilty of the crime).

The two men later bragged about having committed the murder. It was even suggested by a writer who interviewed Carolyn years later that her accusation was a lie. But no justice was ever served in the case.



The Freedom Riders

Through the words of another character in the play, Eddie, we hear about a group called the Freedom Riders.

From Britannica Kids:

The Freedom Rides took place in the United States during the civil rights movement. They were a series of nonviolent political protests against segregation during which African Americans and whites rode buses together through the South in 1961. The violence the Freedom Riders encountered along with the federal government's subsequent intervention drew attention to their cause.

In 1946 the U.S. Supreme Court banned segregation in bus travel between states. Despite that ruling, buses in the South still kept separate seating for whites and Blacks. In 1947 two interracial civil rights groups, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, staged the Journey of Reconciliation to protest the South's rejection of the Supreme Court decision. During their journey Blacks and whites rode together on a bus through parts of the South.

In 1960 the Supreme Court extended the earlier ruling to ban segregation in bus terminals, restrooms, and other facilities associated with interstate travel. CORE, inspired by the Journey of Reconciliation, decided to test the ruling by peacefully challenging the segregation that still existed in the South. On May 4, 1961, under the leadership of activist James Farmer, they organized a group of seven African Americans and six whites to travel by bus on a Freedom Ride throughout the South. The group left Washington, D.C., in two buses bound for New Orleans, Louisiana. When they stopped along the way, white riders used facilities such as restrooms and waiting rooms designated for Blacks and vice versa.

The Freedom Riders encountered some violence in South Carolina, and in Alabama the reaction was much more severe. On May 14, outside Anniston, Alabama, a mob of white people firebombed one bus and beat the Freedom Riders. In Birmingham, another mob attacked the second bus and beat the passengers. In both cases white law enforcement officers were suspiciously late in responding. These original Riders were subsequently unable to find a bus driver to carry them farther.

A second group of 10 Freedom Riders, however, renewed the effort. They were partly organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC),

another interracial group that, at the time, advocated nonviolence. The new Freedom Riders began their journey in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 17. After arriving in Birmingham they were promptly arrested and transported back to Tennessee. More Freedom Riders joined the group, and they returned to Birmingham. There U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy arranged a bus and protection from the State Highway Patrol as they traveled to Montgomery, Alabama. In Montgomery local police failed to protect them, and they were again beaten.



The Alabama and Mississippi governors thereafter reluctantly provided National Guard support to protect the Freedom Riders. The Freedom Riders continued on to Jackson, Mississippi, where they were arrested and jailed. On May 29 Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce even stricter guidelines banning segregation in interstate travel. Dozens of Freedom Rides continued in the South for months afterward until those guidelines took effect.

ATHLETES AS ACTIVISTS

Throughout history, people who have positions that are very public, like politicians, actors, athletes, and other celebrities, have used the positions they have to advocate for issues that are important to them. Their popularity provides them with a platform that makes them very visible to a large audience. Think about your favorite TV actor, your favorite musician, or your favorite professional athlete. They are capable of leveraging their popularity to create change in their industry and outside of their industry. They can do this by bringing on their fans as allies for their cause, by using their position of power to petition for change, and by making their voice heard in places it needs to be heard to create change. They can use their positions to have their voices heard in front of the people who make decisions in their industry, in front of the public, in front of lawmakers, etc.

Muhammad Ali was a great example of someone who used his public persona to bring attention to causes he cared about and to create change. The issue that mattered the most to him was racial injustice and oppression. He committed to making change, even if it was a detriment to his career and even when it risked putting him in jail. At the same time as the Civil Rights movement in the United States, The Vietnam War was happening. At that time, men over 18 could be drafted to participate in the war. Muhammad Ali refused to be drafted, arguing,

“Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?”

In response to his refusal, he was stripped of his boxing title and banned from professional boxing for years. He was also sentenced to five years in jail. He avoided jail, as his case led all the way to the Supreme Court in 1971, which overturned his conviction.



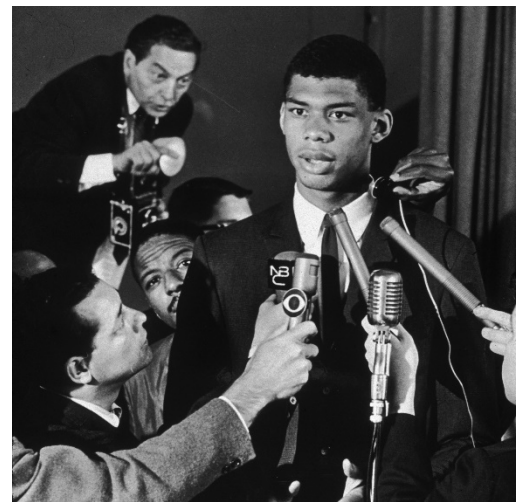
What stands out about *athletes* who advocate for social causes is that their talent can keep them at the top of their field, even if their detractors would prefer to keep them out of the spotlight. So many top athletes have used their platforms to advocate for social change. You may have heard of some:

LeBron James is an American basketball player. He and his teammates wore hoodies in tribute to Florida teenager Trayvon Martin. In 2014, James and other NBA stars wore T-shirts with the words “I Can’t Breathe” to protest the death of Eric Garner, a New York man who died after having been put in a chokehold by a police officer. And in 2015, James called for greater regulation of firearms after a Cleveland baby was killed by gunfire.



In 1947, **Jackie Robinson** broke the color barrier, becoming a pioneer in baseball: The first Black player to play in the MLB (at the time, Black players could only play in the “Negro leagues”). He endured years of violence and mistreatment, but his impact in the fight for equal rights in sports and off the field continued long after his baseball career.

Kareem Abdul Jabar was a professional basketball player in the US. Like Muhammad Ali, Abdul-Jabbar converted to Islam and changed his name from Lew Alcindor. He joined other prominent athletes at the time in supporting Ali’s refusal to be drafted during the Vietnam War and even skipped the 1968 Olympics in protest of racial injustice in the US.





Many **tennis** players throughout history have fought for social justice and equity. **Althea Gibson** and **Arthur Ashe** fought to break the color barrier of the sport, becoming the first Black female and male players to play and win Grand Slam tournaments. **Martina Navratilova** is considered one of the greatest women's tennis players ever. She was a trailblazer for gay rights and other social justice causes. She disclosed that she was a lesbian at the height of her career, jeopardizing her popularity and her endorsements.





Venus Williams advocated in the early 2000's for equal prize money for men and women. In 2006, she got the attention of Parliament when she wrote an op-Ed for the Times of London. When she held the Wimbledon trophy above her head in 2007, along with it came a check for \$1.4 million: The same prize money as the man who would win the 2007 men's trophy.

Billie Jean King, in the 1970's, fought for equal treatment of female players, both as the President of the WTA (Women's Tennis Association).



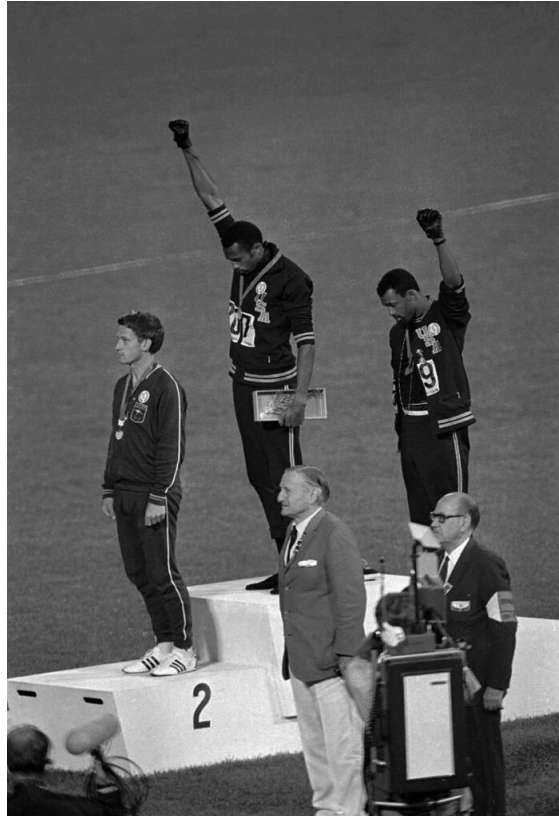
Colin Kaepernick is an American football player. In 2016, he made the decision to take a knee during the national anthem at all NFL games that season, rather than stand with his hand on his heart, as was tradition. He did this as a protest against police brutality and in support of the **Black Lives Matter** movement. This decision

sparked fierce debate in the United States. Arguably, Kaepernick's example will be remembered for its social impact in similar ways to the impact of Muhammad Ali's stand against the Vietnam war.

Discussion:

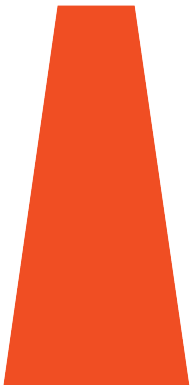
So many other athletes have used their platform to advocate for social change. Some to research include Bill Russell, Joey Cheek, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, etc. Why are athletes, specifically, so well poised to draw attention to major social justice issues?

What examples from above have you heard of before? Has the opinion of an athlete activist (or another public figure) you are a fan of changed and/or reinforced your opinion about the issue they were advocating for? Why or why not?



SECTION IV: YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS

Reading a Scene for Understanding
Scene/Character Analysis



READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

GRADES 5+

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character’s actions to the student’s own life.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character wants.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE EXERCISE

STEP ONE

Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

STEP TWO

Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

STEP THREE

Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Introduction sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them form the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character. They’re simply being honest to their own experiences!

STEP FOUR

After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the classroom for an audience. The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.

AND IN THIS CORNER: CASSIUS CLAY... SCENE:

CASSIUS

Officer. Officer.

JOE MARTIN

Calm down there son.

CASSIUS

My bike! Somebody stole it from me.

JOE MARTIN

You sure you didn't put it somewhere you forgot?

CASSIUS

No Sir. I left it right there on the bench next to theirs'.

JOE MARTIN

But they just took yours?

CASSIUS

It was a brand new red Schwinn. The new one. I only had it just a little while. It was the fastest bike in the world and somebody stole it. They just come and took it!

JOE MARTIN

Calm down.

CASSIUS

I can't be calm. My daddy bought me that bike. It was so fast. I took good care of it too. Washed it every day. Oiled the chain every week and some no good thief just walks up and takes it!

JOE MARTIN

It's alright.

CASSIUS

No its not! You have to find this thief and when you do I'm gonna whup him. I'm gonna whup him so bad he'll never steal anything again.

JOE MARTIN

Is that right?

CASSIUS

I'm gonna whup him so bad you probably have to arrest me and put me in jail next to him and once we get behind bars I'm gon whup him again.

JOE MARTIN

How old are you?

CASSIUS

I'm 12 sir.

JOE MARTIN

You even know how to fight?

CASSIUS

I see that no good thief, I'll be the best fighter you ever seen.

JOE MARTIN

So no? You gonna whup anybody---you better learn how.

CASSIUS

What do you mean?

JOE MARTIN

Come by the Columbia Gym, ask for Joe. That's me.

CASSIUS

Am I under arrest?

JOE MARTIN

No. Why? you got something to confess?

CASSIUS

No sir. No.

JOE MARTIN

I'm gonna go look for that bike. Come on by the gym. I'll show you how to really fight.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE INTRODUCTION

ANALYSIS

Script analysis is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this:

1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What does the character want?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

LITERAL: In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

PURPOSE: An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

WANT: In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

PURPOSE: To focus the actor on the characters' interaction.

ACTION: Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

EXAMPLES:

- Put someone in their place | • Beg someone for forgiveness. | • Get a favor.
- Get someone to let me off the hook. | • Force someone to face the facts.
- Inspire someone to greatness. | • Get someone to see the light.

PURPOSE: Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Acting School teaches that the Action creates character.

AS-IF: In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

EXAMPLE: Get a favor.^[L]_[SEP] It's AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I'm asking my teacher for an extra day to hand it in.^[L]_[SEP]

PURPOSE: To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

TACTICS & TOOLS: Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

EXAMPLE: Plead, joke, demand, inspire, challenge, reason, encourage.

LIVING IN THE MOMENT: Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.

SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

	IF YOU'RE PLAYING CASSIUS...	IF YOU'RE PLAYING JOE MARTIN...
WHAT IS MY CHARACTER LITERALLY DOING?	Cassius is literally talking to Joe about how he needs his help finding the person who stole his bike so Cassius can whup him.	Joe is literally talking to Cassius about Cassius's ability to handle his bike being stolen.
WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?	Cassius wants Joe to agree to immediately help him find the person who stole his bike.	Joe wants Cassius to calmly tell him what happened with his bike instead of letting his emotions get the best of him.
WHAT IS THE ACTION I'M GOING TO PLAY?	To get someone to come through for me	To teach a simple lesson
THE AS-IF...	It's as if I have a big performance coming up for my school play, and I'm asking my big sister to promise me she'll be there.	It's as if I'm talking to a rowdy younger sibling about the importance of being kind to others.

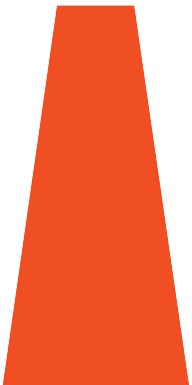
SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Post Theater Creative Writing Activity: Taking a Stand

Post Performance Creative Writing Response: Poetry as a Tool for
Communicating an Important Message

Creating Your Own Review: Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint



POST THEATER CREATIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITY: TAKING A STAND

GRADES 5-8

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To engage students in lively writing exercise using the topic, and a central theme of *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*.

STUDENT GOAL

To take a stand on a specific issue and to write a letter stating their position.

MATERIALS

Paper for writing, pen or pencil.

STEP ONE

Discuss the concept of “taking a stand.” Reference the radio play, as well as the previous section about activist athletes and the biography of Muhammad Ali.

STEP TWO

Have the students begin to brainstorm issues they care about. This could be as micro as an issue at home or as macro as a major social justice cause they are familiar with. Ask the students to write a letter to someone in a position of power, someone with the ability to affect change, stating their position and taking a stand on the issue.

Allow 15-minutes for this free write.

STEP THREE

Ask the students to share their letters, offering positive feedback after each share.

STEP FIVE

If you’d like, as additional writing practice, have students revise their work to

ensure that every sentence is active and the writing is rich and descriptive. This could also become a research project for older students, utilizing scholarly research and essay writing skills.

STEP SIX

You may choose to take it to the publishing phase and put together an anthology of your student activists' letters.

POST PERFORMANCE CREATIVE WRITING

RESPONSE: POETRY AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATING AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

GRADES 5-8

Muhammad Ali had a unique rhetorical style. He often made press appearances speaking in rhyme. In this activity, your students will examine a moment in their life and will adapt it into a poem/rhyme. Encourage your students to take a moment from their life and adapt it into a poem to convey an important message or moment from their own life.

From RollingStone.com

Muhammad Ali: World's Greatest Boxer Was Also Hip-Hop Pioneer His legendary putdowns, toasts and snaps are a part of hip-hop's DNA

"The funky delivery, the boasts, the comical trash talk, the endless quotables: As a rhyming trickster in the early Sixties, the greatest boxer who ever lived was also a cornerstone in the early development of hip-hop music. "Without Muhammad Ali, there would be no 'Mama Said Knock You Out, and the term G.O.A.T. would have never been coined," LL Cool J tells *Rolling Stone*. Generations of youth who grew up during the hip-hop era may have missed out on his boxing exploits in real time, but his outsized personality has been experienced through countless black-and-white newsreels, TV and film documentaries and four-color adventures like *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*, the classic 1978 comic where the heavyweight champion of the world demolishes the Man of Steel. To this day, his poetic flights of whimsy sound as fresh as ever.

When the man formerly known as Cassius Clay taunted his rivals with rhymes such as "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee," he personified a one-upmanship that dates back to West African folk heroes such as Anansi the spider, bringing the oral traditions of the Motherland to the spotlight of American popular culture. As Ali prepared to battle heavyweight champion Sonny Liston in 1964, he offered to the press "Song of Myself," a poem where he prophesized that he would "lower

the boom” and best an opponent that he called “the Bear.” He then proceeded to do just that, triumphing over the heavily favored Liston with both his wit as well as his peerless sporting abilities. “History records that Liston was humiliated twice by Ali,” wrote David Toop in his memorable study of early hip-hop culture, *Rap Attack*.

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

Facilitate the students’ abilities to communicate an important moment in their lives through poetry.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that recalling vivid details of an experience is a great artistic “tool,” and how artistic expression can be an effective tool for conveying a message, inspiring others, and inspiring change.

MATERIALS

Pencils, writing paper OR digital word processing software (Google Doc. MS Word, etc.)

STEP ONE

Provide examples from the radio play and above articles of how rhyme is used by Muhammad Ali to communicate a message. Have the students brainstorm about a moment of triumph or defeat in their lives that might be more meaningfully conveyed through poetry/rhyme.

STEP TWO

Allow 5-10 minutes for free writing.

STEP FOUR

Each student should create at least eight lines of rhyme/poetry.

DISCUSS:

Why do you think presenting an idea/story artistically changes the way people respond to it?

Do very specific details and descriptive language in a poem make it more interesting? Believable? Meaningful?

Does a poem need to/have to rhyme?

CREATING YOUR OWN REVIEW: THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

GRADES 3-5

TEACHER OBJECTIVE

To introduce the critical thinking skills involved in expressing one's personal opinion.

STUDENT GOAL

To understand that the 4Ws can be used to critically describe an artistic experience. To enhance the literacy skills of the 4Ws and sequencing in writing.

MATERIALS

Paper, pen, attached worksheets.

STEP ONE

Review the four W's (who, what where, when). For example, who - Cassius Clay.

STEP TWO

Review the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet with your students. Remember there is no right or wrong response. Each student's review will be based on individual opinion.

STEP THREE

Using the "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down" worksheet, ask the students to write their review in three paragraphs - beginning, middle and conclusion.

STEP FOUR

Post the reviews in the classroom.

THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

WHO: _____

WHAT: _____

WHERE: _____

WHEN: _____

List some images that first spring to mind when you think about the radio play:

List some words or phrases that will remind you of points you want to make:

What did you think of the radio play? What was your opinion?

How do you think costumes, lights, and music might have affected the performance/made it different if it was on stage?

How might you start your paper?

And in This Corner: Cassius Clay

A REVIEW BY: _____

COMMON CORE & DOE THEATER BLUEPRINT

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Theater conveys the significance individuals place on the power of words.

Theater conveys the meaning behind an individual's fight to have his or her own humanity validated by family, friends, community, and the broader world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Do the direction and sound engineering reinforce the themes of courage and perseverance, which are of significance in *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*?

Do you accept the concept put forward in *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay* that a person can overcome challenges they may be presented with if they are willing to take significant risks?

SOURCES:

Britannica Kids

History.com

Rolling Stone

STRAND BENCHMARKS

THEATER MAKING: ACTING

Benchmark: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.

THEATER MAKING: PLAYWRITING/PLAY MAKING

Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY

Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THEATER

Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.

SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

Atlantic Theater Company & Atlantic Acting School

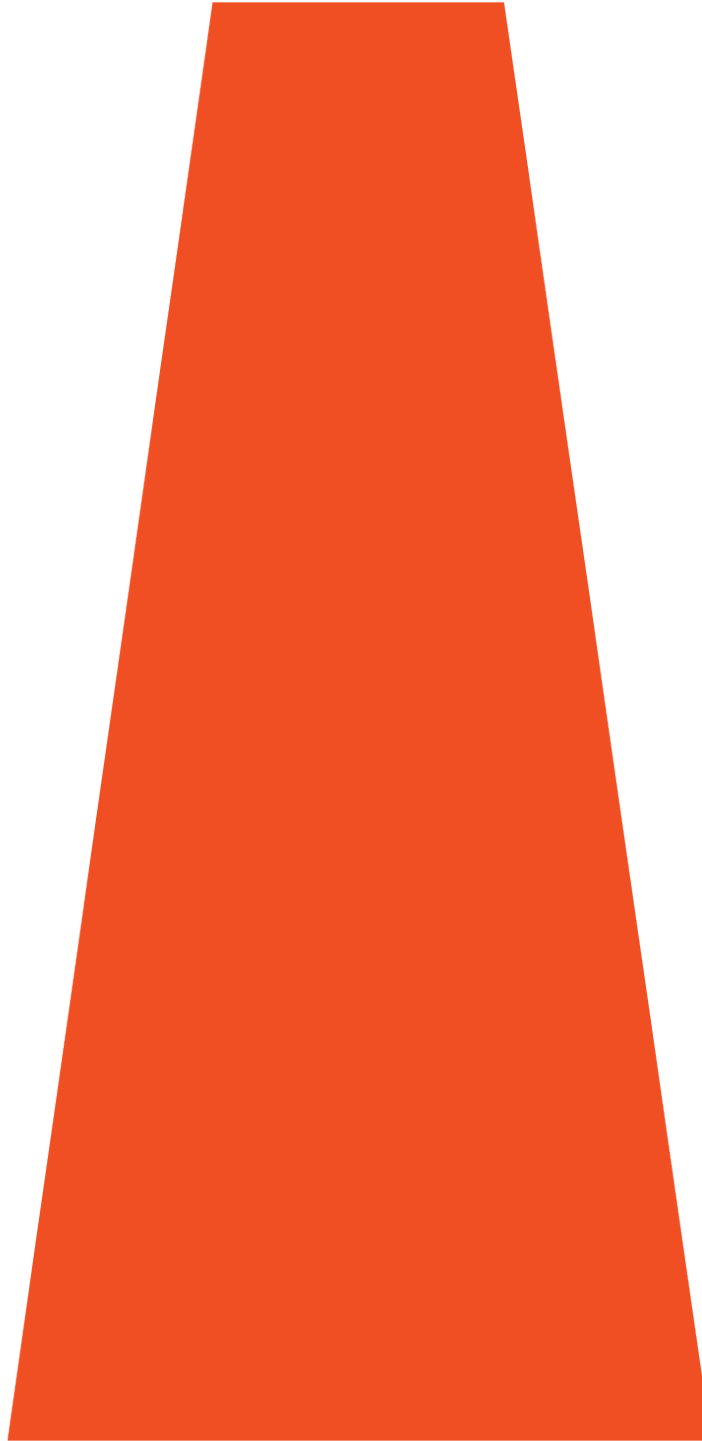


Founded as an ensemble of impassioned student artists in 1985, Atlantic Theater Company has grown into a powerhouse off-Broadway company. We challenge, inspire, and awaken audiences with truthful storytelling presented across our two venues, the Linda Gross Theater and the intimate Stage 2 black-box. As a producer of compelling new works, we are committed to championing the stories from new and established artists alike, amplifying the voices of emerging playwrights through our deeply collaborative programs and

initiatives.

At Atlantic, our aim is singular—to empower simple and honest storytelling that fosters greater understanding of our shared world. We are a family of artists dedicated to exploring essential truths onstage, be it a show at Atlantic Theater Company or a class at Atlantic Acting School. As a producer, presenter, and educator of theater, we are driven by the belief that theater can challenge and transform our ways of thinking and urge us to reflect on our role in society. From our Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning productions to our community-based education programs, we are committed to uncovering and celebrating the stories of our varied human existence.

At Atlantic Acting School, we equip our students with the physical, emotional, and tactical tools of acting to discover their truths, and prepare them for success beyond our doors. From our full-time and evening conservatories to our NYU Tisch studio, and our after-school and summer programs for kids and teens, our immersive, learn-by-doing approach is central to an Atlantic Acting education. We have mentored and trained outstanding artists for more than 30 years. No matter their age or background, our students learn to break through their creative comfort zones in service to bringing essential human stories to life.



LINDA GROSS THEATER: 336 W 20th St. New York, NY, 10011 | ATLANTIC STAGE 2: 330 W 16th St. New York, NY, 10011 | ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES & ATLANTIC ACTING SCHOOL: 76 Ninth Ave., Suite 313, New York, NY 10011 | ATLANTICTHEATER.ORG