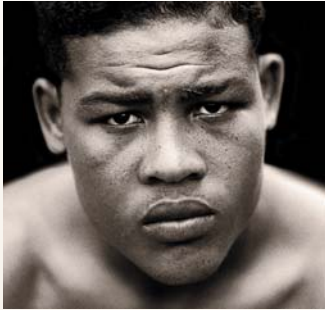


JOE LOUIS

AMERICA'S HERO...BETRAYED

Dear Educator:

The story of the great American boxer, Joe Louis, is one of triumph and tragedy. He rose from poverty in the Deep South and lived under the cruel inequities of the Jim Crow laws, which not



only segregated blacks and whites, but treated blacks as second class citizens or worse. Louis rose above the prejudice to become one of the greatest athletes of all time. In 1936, when Louis suffered a humiliating loss to a German named Max Schmeling, Adolf Hitler seized the opportunity to promote Schmeling as proof of Aryan superiority. When Louis defeated Schmeling soundly in a 1938 rematch, it was Hitler and Nazism that were humiliated. Louis was heralded as a world hero, but the glory did not last. Although he was one of the first black Americans to break the color barrier, he is often overlooked in historical context.



This dramatic tale is told in the new HBO film, **Joe Louis: America's Hero...Betrayed** premiering on February 23, 2008 at 8 PM Eastern/9 PM Pacific. This study guide,

developed by the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) and made possible by HBO, is designed to enrich your students' viewing of **Joe Louis: America's Hero...Betrayed**. The study guide features lessons in civics, American history, and English/Language Arts. Activities include writing, group work, research, and discussion. You and your students do not need to see **Joe Louis: America's Hero...Betrayed** to use these activities, but viewing the film will enhance student understanding.

We urge you to share this exciting program with other teachers in your school. Although the materials are copyrighted, you have permission to reproduce them for educational purposes. And please return the enclosed reply card to let us know your opinion of the program. We depend on your feedback to continue providing free educational programs that make a real difference in the classroom.

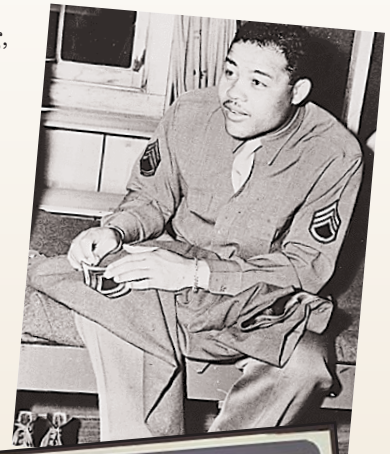
We are sure these materials will help you explore a compelling individual and period in American history, and serve as a perfect educational vehicle during Black History month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Kinsley".

Dr. Dominic Kinsley

Editor-in-Chief



is the only company developing free, innovative classroom materials that is owned and directed by award-winning former teachers. Visit our website at www.ymteacher.com to send feedback and download more free programs. For questions contact us at YMI, 1-800-859-8005 or email us at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.

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How to Use This Program

This program has been designed for high school English/Language Arts and history classes. Please share it with other teachers as appropriate.

Program Components

- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activities
- A colorful wall poster depicting Joe Louis
- A reply card for your important feedback

Program Objectives

- To explore the effects of Joe Louis' life and accomplishments.
- To compare and contrast Joe Louis' life and accomplishments with other Black American heroes.
- To gain a clearer understanding of racism and discrimination and how Black American heroes changed societal views.

How to Use The Teacher's Guide and Poster

- Review and schedule the three activities into your lesson plans, and photocopy them for students.
- Photocopy the Resources and Websites list and distribute to aid in students' research.
- Display the poster in a prominent location to promote and engage student interest.

Standards Alignment

This program aligns with English/Language arts and history national standards. For details, please visit www.yमितeacher.com/pdf/joelouisstandards.pdf.

Resources

Beyond Glory: Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling and A World on the Brink, by David Margolick, 2005

Champion - Joe Louis, Black Hero in White America, by Chris Mead, Scriber, 1985

Heroes Without a Country: America's Betrayal of Joe Louis and Jesse Owens, by Donald McRae, Ecco/Harper Collins, 2002

Joe Louis: 50 Years an American Hero, by Joe Louis Barrow and Barbara Munder, McGraw Hill, 1988

Joe Louis: A Champ for All America, by Robert Lipsyte, Harper Collins, 1994

Joe Louis: American fighter, by David A. Adler, Gulliver Books, 2005

Joe Louis - My Life, by Joe Louis, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978

The Greatest Fight of Our Generation: Louis vs. Schmeling, by Lewis A. Erenberg, Oxford University Press, 2005

Websites

Interviews, production footage, background, and to download the HBO Films podcast www.hbo.com/films/joelouis

American Experience section of the PBS website, featuring Joe Louis www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/fight/peoplevents/p_louis.html

Article on the 1938 Louis-Schmeling fight in the Legends and Lore section of the International Boxing Hall of Fame www.ibhof.com/ibhfhvy5.htm

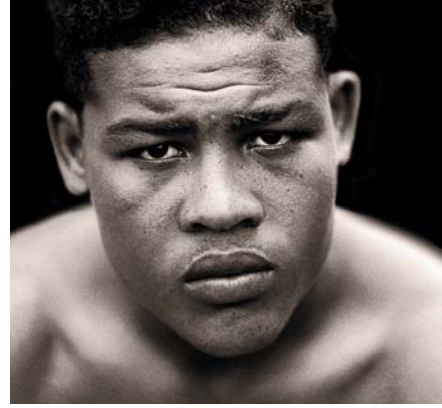
International Boxing Hall of Fame, Joe Louis biographical information www.ibhof.com/jlouis.htm

Joe Louis's Greatest Fights from ESPN <http://sports.espn.go.com/sports/boxing/news/story?id=2449306>

The official Joe Louis website, containing biographical information, photos, and quotes www.cmgworldwide.com/sports/louis/index.php

Joe Louis section on the Congressional Medal of Honor website www.congressionalgoldmedal.com/JoeLouis.htm

The above resources are not affiliated with HBO.



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Activity One Read All About It

This activity guides students through a sports writing assignment as they



consider the larger implications of Louis' defeat of the German, Max Schmeling, in a historic boxing match in the

summer of 1938. Introduce this activity by leading a class discussion on the global situation just prior to the start of World War II. Discuss the following historical events:

- Upon the death of German president Paul von Hindenburg, Hitler had used his bullying tactics to have himself declared Fuhrer, or supreme ruler, of Germany.
- Hitler built up the German army, threatened the rest of Europe, and stripped German Jews of their rights as citizens with the Nuremberg Race Law.
- Hitler's promotion of Aryan (blond, blue-eyed) supremacy was known throughout the world.
- Max Schmeling was an Aryan boxer whose defeat of Louis in 1936 was used by Nazis as an example of Aryan supremacy.

Part A. Tell students that many authors, including Ernest Hemingway and Joyce Carol Oates, have found a connection between boxing and literature. They feel that a great boxing match somehow tells a story. Students should begin by using the *Plot the Fight* graphic organizer to organize the details of the 1938 Louis-Schmeling fight -- from the media hype and build-up, to the actual fight, to the world-wide effect on morale.

Part B. On the back of the activity sheet, students compile an outline to organize their thoughts. Students use this information to write a sports article describing the Louis-Schmeling fight and its implications. Make sure they have seen examples of sports writing before they begin. When articles have been completed, collect and publish them in a class magazine or post them on a bulletin board along with copies of original articles about the fight.

Extensions

Have students debate one of the following topics about the role of sports in the political arena:

- Should sports transcend politics or serve as a forum for political discussion?
- Is there honor in a combative sport, such as boxing?
- How has commercialism affected the role of today's athlete in society?



Activity Two Outliving the Legend

This activity guides students to explore different American heroes and their characteristics. In Activity One, students discovered how Joe Louis defeated Max Schmeling in the rematch of 1938 and how Louis became an American hero.



In this activity, students compare and contrast Joe Louis to Jackie Robinson. Lastly, students complete an essay in which they compare and contrast sports heroes, examining different types of American heroes.

Part A. Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson were both great American heroes, but are regarded differently in history. In 1947, Jackie Robinson was the first black baseball player to be accepted in all-white Major League Baseball. Have students research both individuals, and then ask them to consider why American society may have treated these two heroes differently. Ask them to use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast their accomplishments, the time periods in which they lived, their personalities, and their place in history.

Part B. In preparation for an essay comparing and contrasting Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson, ask students to outline their essay in the space provided on the sheet.

Part C. Joe Louis, as well as many other athletes, brought about social and political change. Ask students to select a favorite athlete and consider this person's affect on society today and in the future.

Extensions

- Students should interview their parents, grandparents or older neighbors about Joe Louis. Assist students as they prepare questions for their interview and review the three P's of good interviewing: be polite, be prepared, be poised. You can compile their interviews for the class to read.

Activity Three Joe Louis: American Citizen

In this activity, students investigate an essential question of civic responsibility — what does it mean to be an American citizen?— in the context of one great man. In 1982, Joe Louis received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest and most distinguished civilian award in the United States. Discuss with students the qualifications and significance of the Congressional Gold Medal. Next, invite students to work in small groups to research Louis and several other recipients of the award along with the award itself.

Students should investigate

who has received the award; how recipients were chosen; and the variety of recipients. Lastly, students have the opportunity to

nominate someone for the Congressional Gold Metal

indicating reasons this person is deserving of such a admirable honor.

Extensions

- Have students create a timeline of the events of Joe Louis' life as they parallel the social and historical events of the time.
- Ask students to role play, keep a character diary as Louis, or write letters from him to express how these events in his life affected him and his career choice and success.



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JOE LOUIS

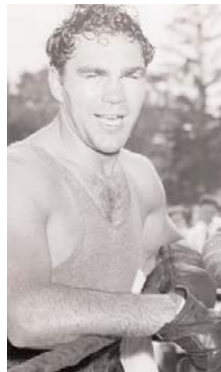
AMERICA'S HERO...BETRAYED



Activity One

Read All About It

Reproducible Activity Master



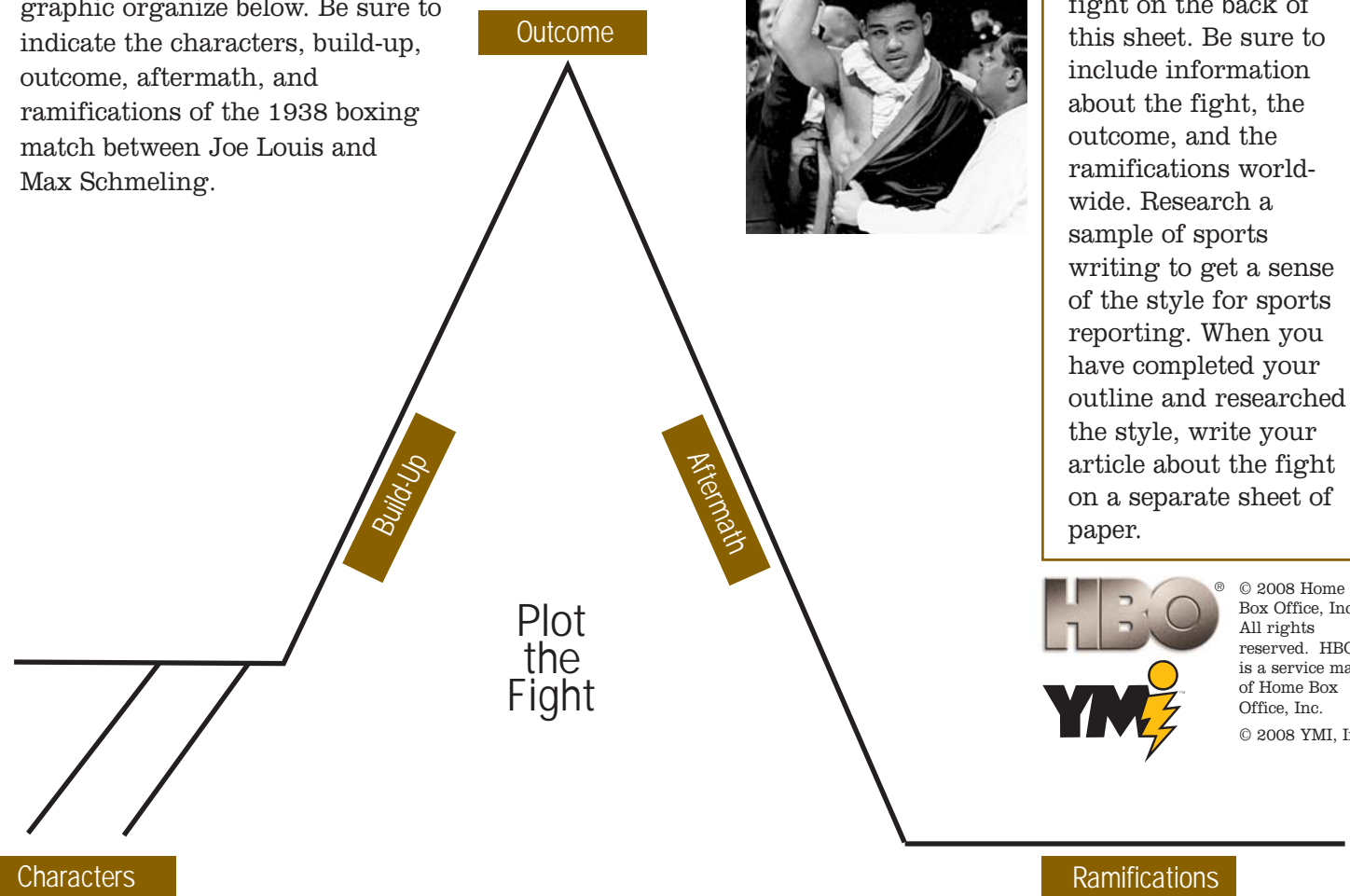
In the summer of 1936, when Joe Louis and Max Schmeling had their first fight, the world was in turmoil, and the conflict that would become known as World War II was only three years away. Tensions boiled over as questions of racial supremacy loomed large. Joe Louis suffered his first knock-out to Schmeling and the propaganda war was fueled. Two years later, in their famous rematch, Louis proved that Nazi doctrine was not supreme, as he defeated Max Schmeling in a fight heard round the world.

Part A. Several famous authors including Ernest Hemingway and Joyce Carol Oates have written extensively about the sport of boxing. They feel there is a direct relation between storytelling and boxing reporting, especially when you consider events leading up to a match and its aftermath.

Using online or library research, detail the events on the *Plot the Fight* graphic organize below. Be sure to indicate the characters, build-up, outcome, aftermath, and ramifications of the 1938 boxing match between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling.



Part B. Using the graphic organizer in Part A, create an outline for a newspaper sports article about the Louis-Schmeling fight on the back of this sheet. Be sure to include information about the fight, the outcome, and the ramifications world-wide. Research a sample of sports writing to get a sense of the style for sports reporting. When you have completed your outline and researched the style, write your article about the fight on a separate sheet of paper.



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AMERICA'S HERO...BETRAYED



Activity Two

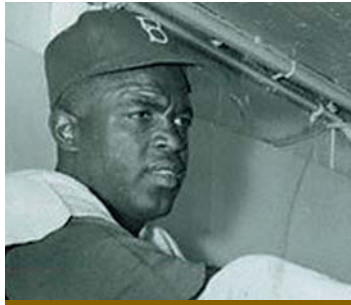
Outliving the Legend

Adolf Hitler's plans for Aryan domination were well under way long before the beginning of World War II. To aid in this campaign, propaganda before the rematch of Joe Louis and Max Schmeling positioned the fight as a showcase for conflicting ideologies.

After his triumph over Schmeling, Joe Louis was heralded not only as a great athlete, but as the symbol of the desired defeat of Nazism and racial discrimination. This was partly due to the public's hailing him as a great athlete—not just a great Black athlete. But years later, Louis ended up without money or status, working in a casino in Las Vegas.



Joe Louis

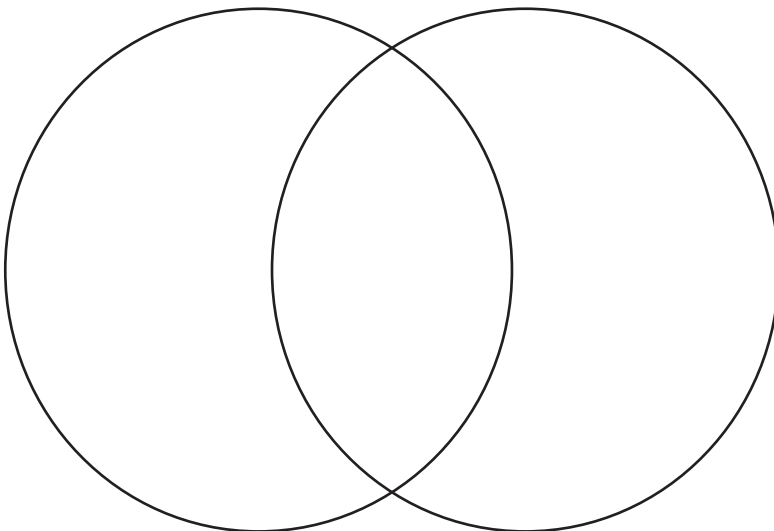


Jackie Robinson

Part A. Sports heroes play a major role in breaking down prejudices. Research the life, accomplishments, and demeanor of two legendary Black athletes – Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson. Then use this Venn Diagram to chart their similarities and differences including their accomplishments, the time periods in which they lived, their personalities, and their place in history.

Joe Louis

Jackie Robinson



Part B. Use the space below to organize your thoughts for a compare-and-contrast essay that you will write on a separate sheet.

Topic Sentence, Paragraph 1 (Louis):

Topic Sentence, Paragraph 2 (Jackie Robinson):

Discussion Points:

Conclusion:

Part C. Joe Louis might be considered a “quiet” hero (someone who makes news by his accomplishments, rather than his bravado). Choose a famous athlete today. Discuss the following: Why is this person famous?

Has this person affected social change?

What future accomplishments do you expect from this athlete?

Predict this athlete's legacy.



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Activity Three

Joe Louis: American Citizen



The Congressional Gold Medal of Honor – more commonly known as the Congressional Gold Medal – “is the nation’s highest and most distinguished civilian award. The medal is presented both for singular acts of exceptional service and for lifetime achievement.” — (The Congressional Gold)

Many world-famous individuals have received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor, such as Sir Winston Churchill, Dr. Jonas Salk, Mother Teresa, and Simon Wiesenthal. Joe Louis was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal posthumously in 1982.

Research the following Congressional Gold Medal of Honor winners and explain why you think they were awarded this prize.

1. **Nelson Mandela**
Accomplishment:

What do these recipients have in common?

2. **Jackie Robinson**
Accomplishment:

What are some differences?

3. **Dr. Martin Luther King**
Accomplishment:

Who would you nominate today for a Congressional Medal of Honor and why?

4. **Elie Wiesel**
Accomplishment:

5. **Joe Louis**
Accomplishment:



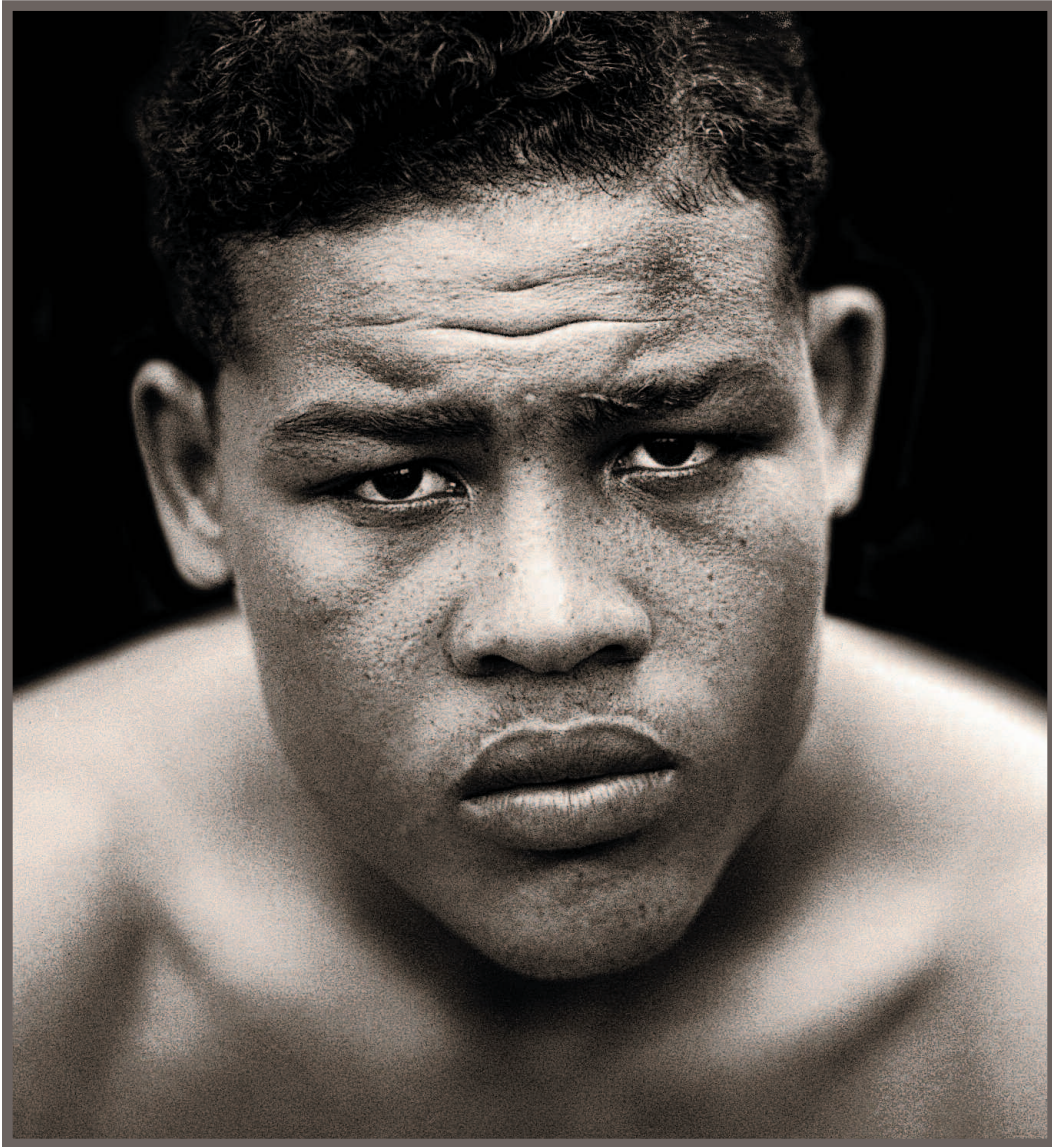
President Ronald Reagan presents the Congressional Gold Medal to Mrs. Joe Louis



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AMERICA'S HERO...BETRAYED

Sports
of the 20th
Century

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