

JOE LOUIS

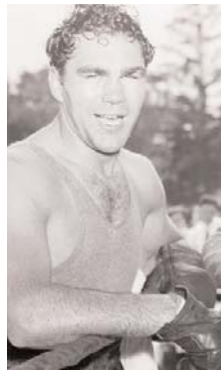
AMERICA'S HERO...BETRAYED



Activity One

Read All About It

Reproducible Activity Master



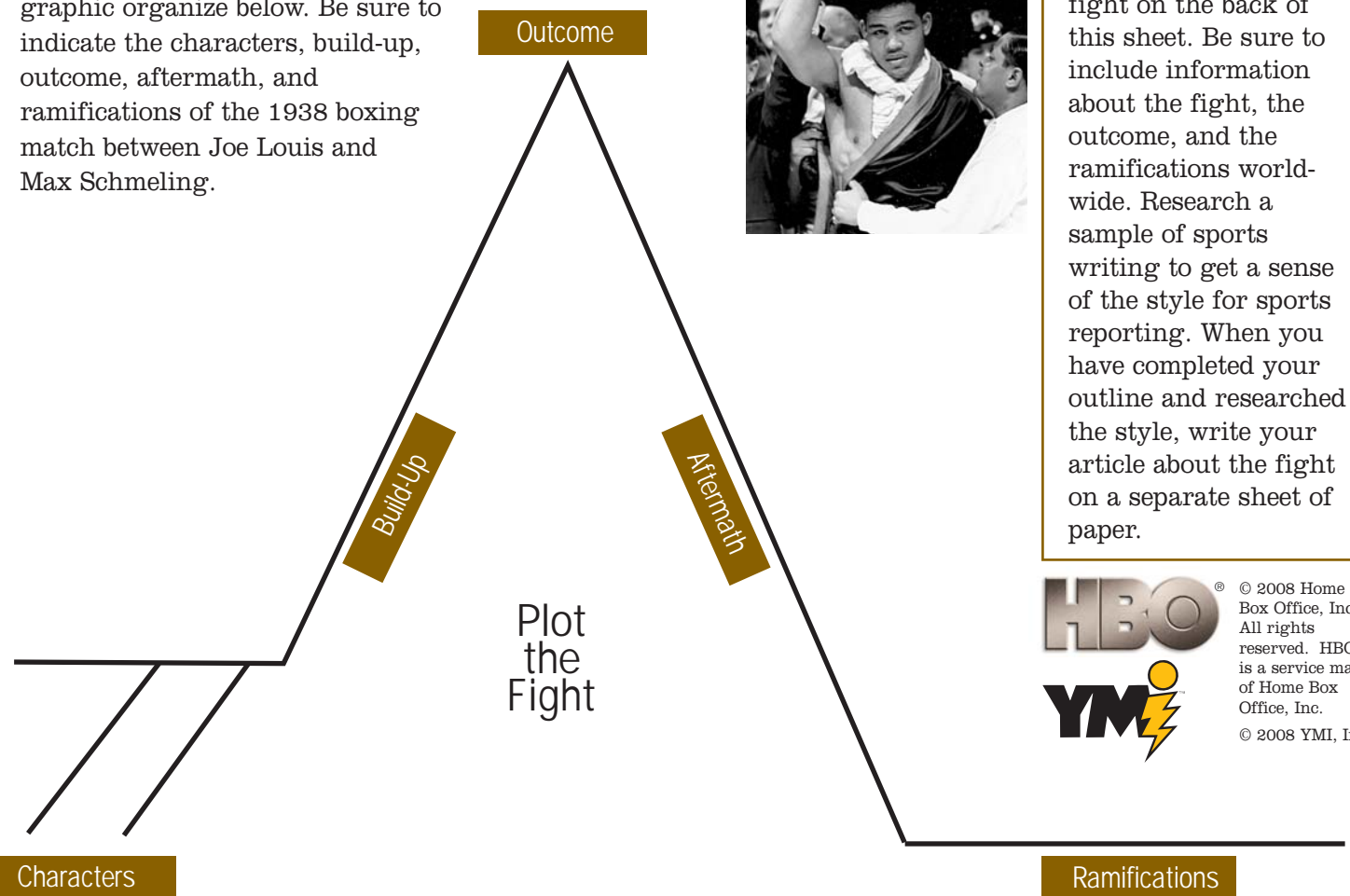
In the summer of 1936, when Joe Louis and Max Schmeling had their first fight, the world was in turmoil, and the conflict that would become known as World War II was only three years away. Tensions boiled over as questions of racial supremacy loomed large. Joe Louis suffered his first knock-out to Schmeling 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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Watch **Joe Louis: America's Hero...Betrayed** on February 23 at 8PM Eastern/9PM Pacific on HBO.

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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

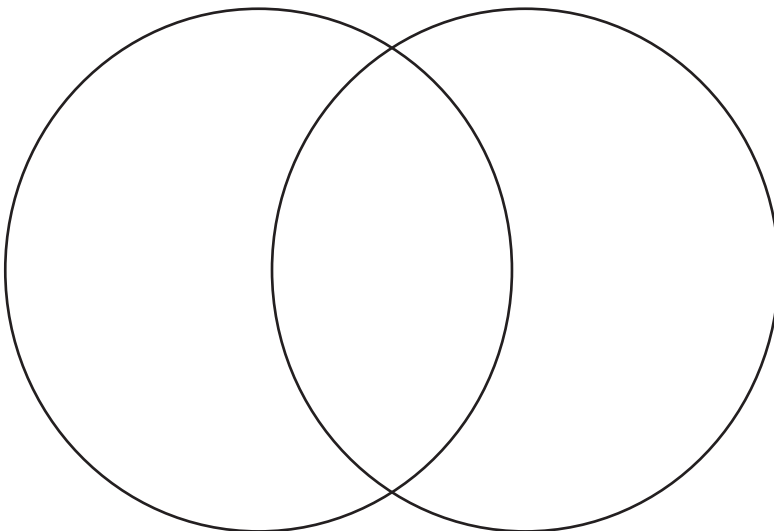


Jackie Robinson

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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