

#10024 FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY

DISNEY EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIONS, 2002
Grade Level: 3-6
18 mins.

DESCRIPTION

Shelley, hostess of the Beyond the Page Cafe, reads *Float Like a Butterfly* to the Cafe kids. This brief biography of Muhammad Ali emphasizes his drive to succeed and strong self-esteem. The Cafe kids then have an online interview with the book's author Ntozake Shange and illustrator Edel Rodriguez. The session ends with a "visit" to a gym that caters to young people who share Ali's spirit.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts–Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, nursery rhymes, picture books, predictable books) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 2.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Knows the main ideas or theme of a story (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1, 5, and 6.)
- Standard: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses personal criteria to select reading material (e.g., personal interest, knowledge of authors and genres, text difficulty, recommendations of others) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2, 3, and 4.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Understands the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to inform) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1, 3, and 5.)

Subject Area: Language Arts–Viewing

- Standard: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
 - ◆ Benchmark: Understands different messages conveyed through visual media (e.g., main ideas and supporting details; facts and opinions; main

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characters, setting, and sequence of events in visual narratives) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1, 3, and 5.)

Subject Area: Life Work–Self-Regulation

- Standard: Demonstrates perseverance
 - ♦ Benchmark: Demonstrates perseverance relative to personal goals (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 6.)
 - ♦ Benchmark: Persists in the face of difficulty (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 6.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To show the book *Float Like a Butterfly* by Ntozake Shange and produce a thorough understanding of the story.
2. To promote the reading of children’s literature, especially books by this author, illustrator, or about this subject matter.
3. To introduce the author of the book, find out how she chose parts of Ali’s life for the book, and hear her suggestions for kids about writing.
4. To introduce the illustrator of the book, Edel Rodriquez, who shares information about himself and how he illustrated this story.
5. To describe Muhammad Ali’s life and explain why he is a hero to many people.
6. To inspire young people to work hard to overcome obstacles and never give up.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The book has a note from the author at the start explaining some of the reasons why she believes Muhammad Ali to be a hero. The book also has a two-page annotated timeline of Ali’s life after the story.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. boxer | 9. gold medal |
| 2. champion | 10. heavyweight |
| 3. colored | 11. hero |
| 4. defeat | 12. Olympics |
| 5. equal rights | 13. perseverance |
| 6. excellence | 14. ring (boxing) |
| 7. fighter | 15. rhyme |
| 8. generosity | 16. segregated |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Explain that the video tells the story of Muhammad Ali.
 - a. Share known information about Ali.
 - b. Discuss why a boxer might need perseverance, or the ability to keep going despite obstacles.
 - c. Discuss boxing. Introduce boxing vocabulary used in the story: ring, bout, knock out, duck, bob, strike, and round.
2. Review information about the Olympics.

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3. Discuss sports heroes. Who is your sports hero? What do you admire about him or her?
4. Review basic information about the South in the 1950s prior to desegregation. Discuss how it would feel to be segregated as African Americans were.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Consider pausing after the reading of the book to review the story elements.

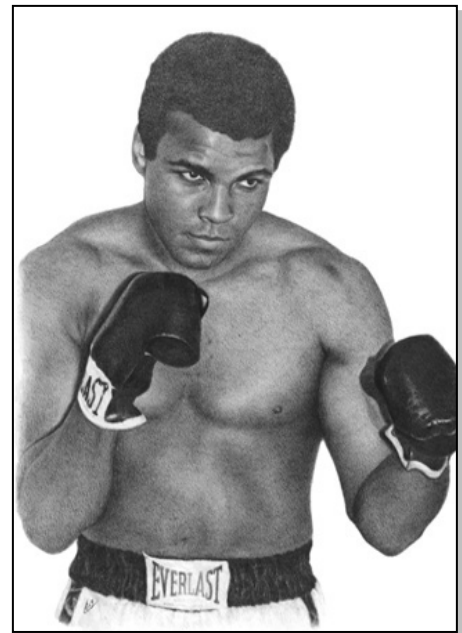
AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What problems does Muhammad Ali face in his childhood? What does he do as a result?
2. What happens at the 1960 Olympics? How old is Ali at the time?
3. What title does he earn in 1964?
4. Why does Ali refuse to fight in Vietnam? What happens as a result of that decision?
5. What does Ali do after he loses the big fight with Joe Frazier in 1971? How does he get the title of Heavyweight Champion of the World back? What does that tell us about him?
6. What does Ali do now? Why?
7. What does the author say are four things Ali believes in (perseverance, excellence, equal rights, and generosity)?
8. What are three words that you feel best describe Muhammad Ali?
9. Why is Muhammad Ali a hero today?

Applications and Activities

1. Look at the posters in the book. Make a poster for another sports star or personal hero. Include catchy words. Display the posters.
2. Review some of the rhymes of Ali. Make up other short rhymes about qualities of heroes.
3. Brainstorm unanswered questions about Ali. Research to find the answers. Use what is learned to write a brief story, make a comic book, or role-play an interview with Ali.
4. Review the conversation with the author and illustrator.
 - a. Generate more questions to ask them or comment about the book.
 - b. Mail the questions to: Ntozake Shange and Edel Rodriguez, c/o Hyperion Books for Children, Disney Book Publishing Inc., 114 5th Ave., Floor 14, New York, NY 10011-5604.
5. Investigate more about the Olympics.



SUMMARY

1. Synopsis of the video: At the Beyond the Page Café, "today's special" is *Float Like a Butterfly* written by Ntozake Shange and illustrated by Edel Rodriguez. Host Shelley reads the story aloud to the café's guests, and we view an animation of Rodriguez's illustrations. The illustrator used an unusual combination of pastel, woodblock ink, and spray paint to bring Ali's story to life. After reading the story, the children have an online chat with Ntozake Shange, who explains which parts of Ali's life she chose to use, and with the illustrator, Edel Rodriguez, who talks about his illustration techniques. Next the kids watch a video about kids who share Ali's spirit.
2. Synopsis of the book: Muhammad Ali, born Cassius Clay, grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, in the segregated South. Brimming with confidence, he told his mother he would be a "colored superman." Over time, he developed his lightning-quick boxing style—and rhyming skills—and won the gold medal at the 1960 Olympics. After adopting Islam as his religion, he called himself Muhammad Ali. He became a spokesman for equal rights for all people. He believed in excellence and perseverance, overcoming the odds to regain the title Heavyweight Champion of the World.



CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [African-American Heroes of Sport #8605](#)
- [Heroes of Sport #9223](#)
- [Whitewash #10104](#)

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

• NTOZAKE SHANGE

<http://aalbc.com/authors/ntozake.htm>

Meet the author of this children's book. Sponsored by the African American Literature Book Club, this Web site lists all of this author's books and has links to several of her works as well as black history and literature.

- **EDEL RODRIGUEZ**

http://www.stock-illustration-portfolios.com/artistPage/Rodriguez_Edel.html

Read a brief biography of the illustrator of the book and view some of his other art work.

- **MUHAMMAD ALI**

<http://www.ali.com>

Welcome to Muhammad Ali's official Web site. Here you can learn about what he has been up to lately, view his boxing record, learn about causes and issues he believes in, and even share some of your own stories.

- **BOXING HALL OF FAME**

<http://www.ibhof.com/ibhfhome.htm>

At the Web site for the International Boxing Hall of Fame, find information about the Hall of Fame, legends and lore, and biographies of all the "enshrines," including Muhammad Ali.

- **USA BOXING**

<http://www.usaboxing.org>

At this Web site for the 2004 USA Olympic boxing team, you can find official boxing rules and information about members of the boxing team.