**Muhammad Ali: A Champion is Born**

**By Gene Barretta**

Lesson Plan by Bitsy Galaska, Librarian

Third Grade-A Biography Study

**Common Core State Standards-English Language Arts-Literacy, Reading Informational Text Grade 3**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/1/) Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/2/) Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/3/) Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/7/) Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/8/) Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

**Focus**

Critical thinkers actively and skillfully interpret, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information

**Activation**

Introduce author Gene Barretta to students and share information about his website [www.genebarretta.com](http://www.genebarretta.com/). Explain we will be reading a book written by Gene and talk about a very athlete that you may have read about before.

**Pre Reading Conversation:**

* Who has heard of Muhammad Ali?
* Where and when did he live?
* What else made him famous?
* Do you know what the civil rights era was about?
* Who has watched a boxing match?

**Post Reading Conversation:**

* What do you think about Muhammad Ali’s attitude in and out of the ring? He says some pretty wild things, I shook up the world! I am the greatest! Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee-his hands can’t hit what his eyes can’t see!
* Do you need to have an attitude like this to be a sports competitor, why or why not?
* Did his father think boxing was a good idea?
* Was he driven?

**Mini-Lesson**

* This unit can be as elaborate or simple as you want, incorporate information literacy skills in throughout the lesson: note-taking, fact vs. fiction exploration, online searching, script writing, performing. Use this idea as a starting point.
* Begin the unit explaining that students (working in pairs) will be create an interview with Muhammad Ali.
* One person will ask questions as an interviewer the other will be Muhammad Ali.
* Read the book again and find five facts that you want to turn into an interview question. Students may use other resources to find facts on Muhammad Ali, such as PebbleGo, WorldBookOnline.
* Once pairs find five facts they like, they must turn those facts into a question and answer, for example:
  + Fact-Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. was born on January 17, 1942, turned into a question and answer could look like this:
    - Interviewer: Muhammad Ali, thank you for joining me, tell me when were you born?
    - MA: I was born with the name Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr on January 17, 1942.
* Once the five questions and introduction have been created, video the students conducting the interview. Remind them about voice-inflection, animation, excitement. Merge videos together to create a movie to share with whole class.

**Extended Lesson**

For students who finish quickly, have them find another person to research, Gene has other books that discuss the lives of Thomas Edison (*Timeless Thomas: How Thomas Edison Changed Our Lives)*, Leonardo da Vinci (*Neo Leo: the Ageless Ideas of Leonardo da Vinci)*, Ben Franklin (*Now & Ben: the Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin), Steven Spielberg (Starring Steven Spielberg: The Making of a Young Filmmaker), George Washington Carver (The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver), Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy (Lincoln and Kennedy: A Pair to Compare).*