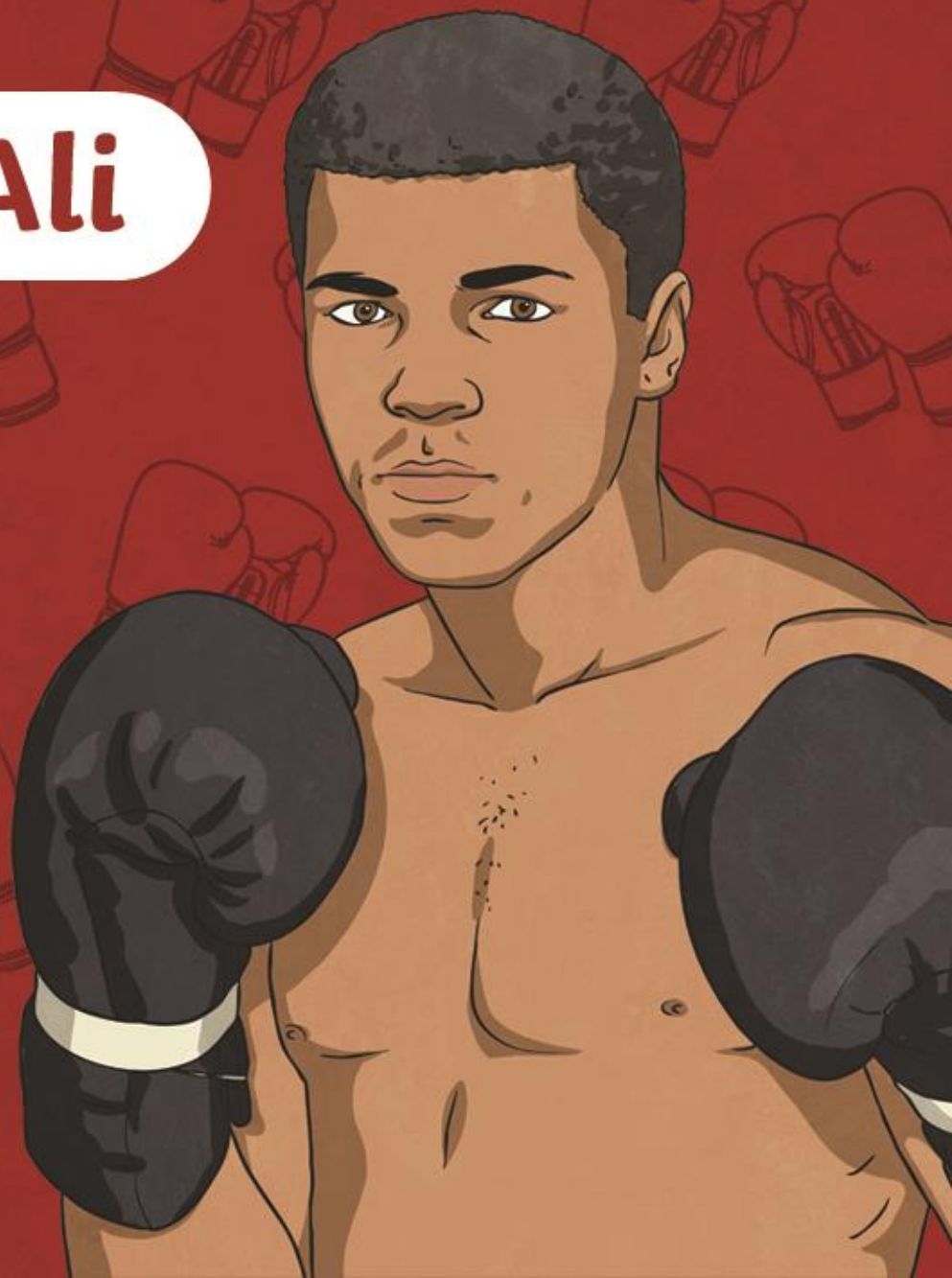


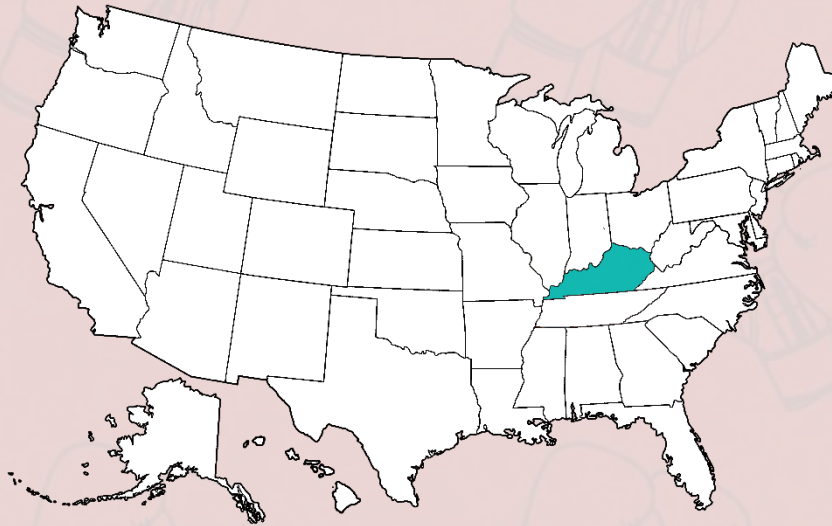
Muhammad Ali



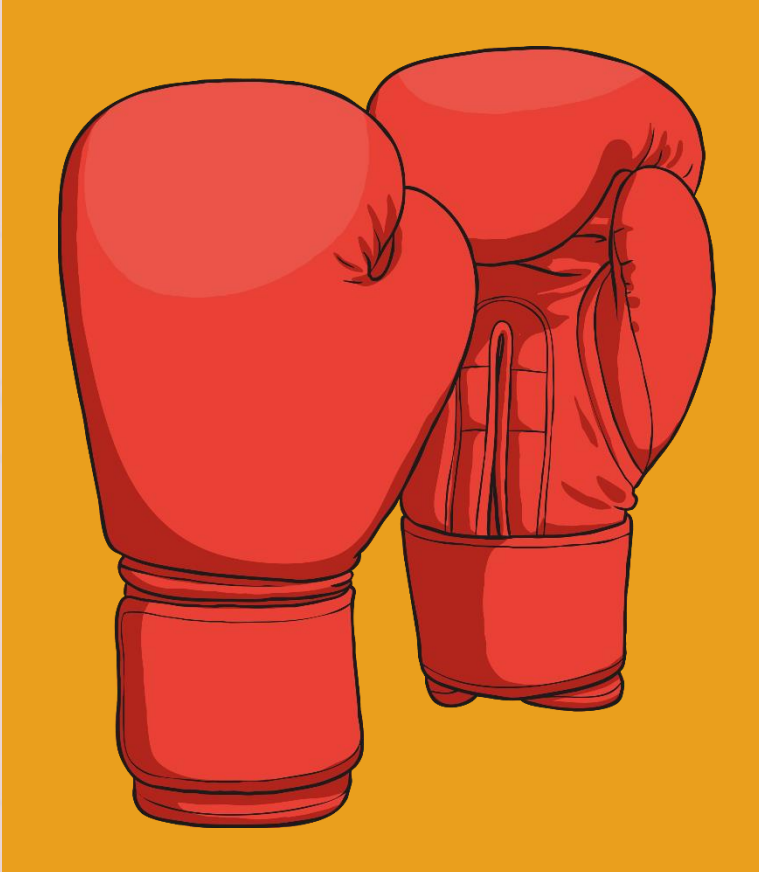
Early Life

Muhammad Ali was born on 17th January 1942 in Kentucky, America. He was named Cassius Marcellus Clay Junior.

His father worked as a sign painter and his mother worked as a maid. He had a younger brother called Rudy.



Becoming a Boxer



When he was 12, someone stole his bike.

Cassius was very angry and told the police officer he was going to beat up the thief.

The police officer and boxing coach, Joe Martin, told him he should learn how to box first.

Facing Prejudice

However, Cassius Clay was not popular with everyone.

At this time, in America, black people were not treated as equal citizens. They were often cruelly and brutally discriminated against because of their race.

Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali) always campaigned against this and tirelessly fought for racial equality.

World Heavyweight Champion

In 1964, Cassius won the World Heavyweight Championship and so became the world champion. Cassius won lots of fights and became known for having his own unique style of boxing as well as writing poetry.

One of his most famous lines was “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.”

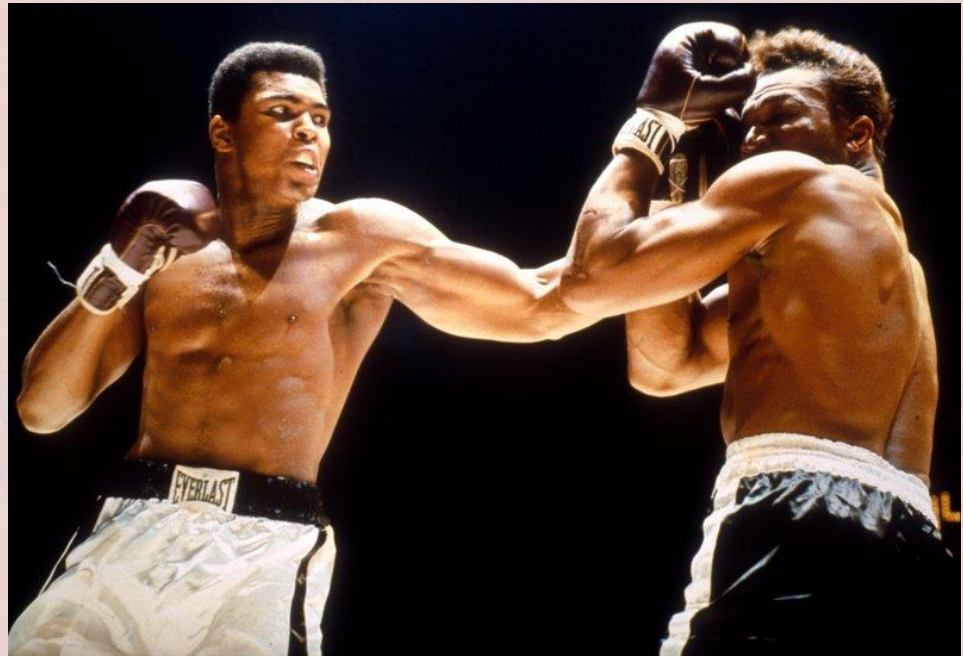


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Changes

In 1964, a few days after becoming world champion, Cassius converted to Islam and changed his name to Muhammad Ali.

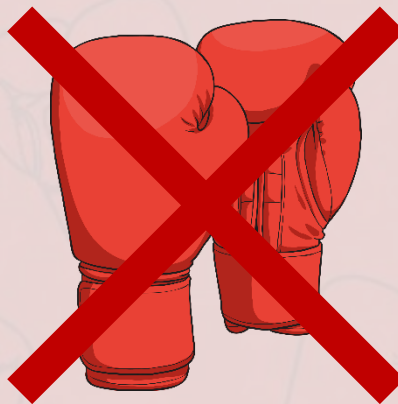


Conscientious Objector

In 1967, Muhammad refused to join the U.S Army and fight in the Vietnam War. Because of this, he was arrested, stripped of his heavyweight title and wasn't allowed to fight for three years.

His refusal to fight in the Vietnam War made him a very controversial figure at the time.

Muhammad appealed and in 1971 his conviction was overturned.



Fight Back

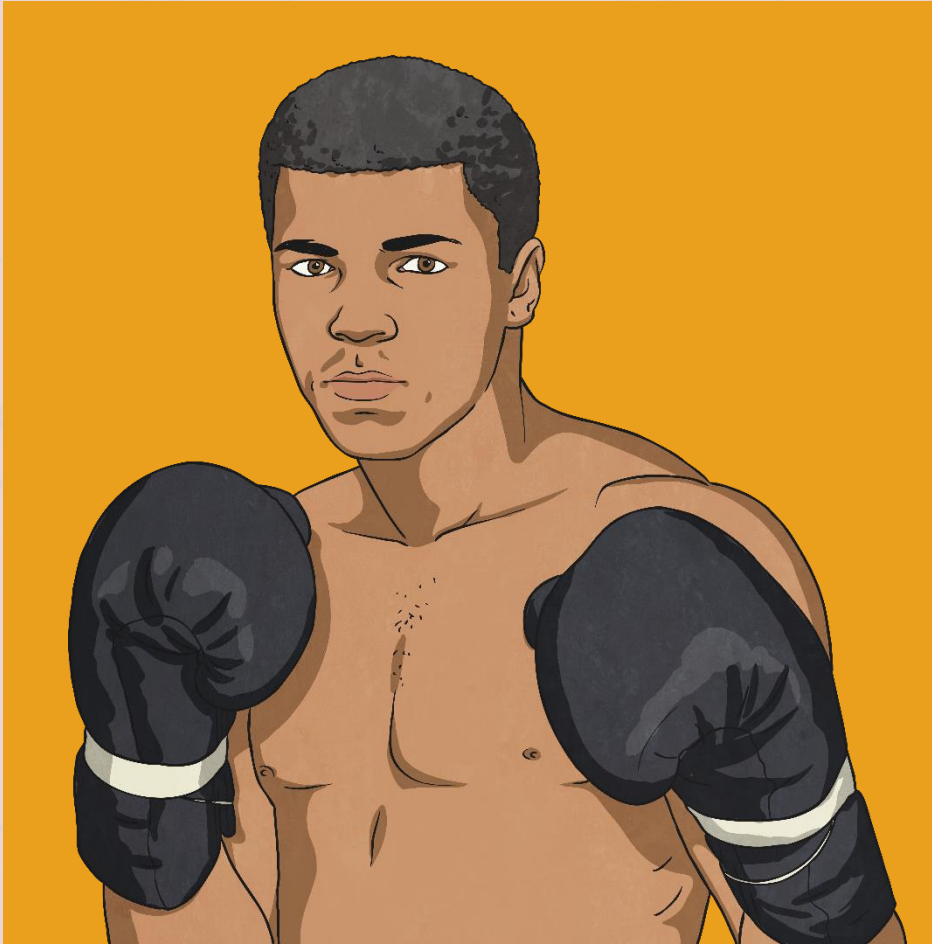
Muhammad started boxing again and soon began winning lots of famous boxing matches.

In 1974, he won the world heavyweight championship for the second time and in 1978, he won again for the third time.

Due to his success, he earned the nickname 'The Greatest'.



Retirement



In 1979, Muhammad announced his retirement from boxing.

However, Muhammad did box again in an attempt to become the world heavyweight champion for a fourth time.

By this time though, Muhammad had become unwell and fought his last boxing match in 1980.

Later Years

In 1984, Muhammad was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which over time had affected his movement and communication.



Since retiring, he stayed busy by making many appearances around the world.

In 1996, he lit the Olympic flame at the Olympic Games in America, and in 2012 he appeared at the opening ceremony of the London Olympics.

Later Years

Muhammad Ali was admitted to hospital in June 2016 with respiratory problems.

On 4th June 2016, Muhammad died in hospital, aged 74, in Phoenix, Arizona.

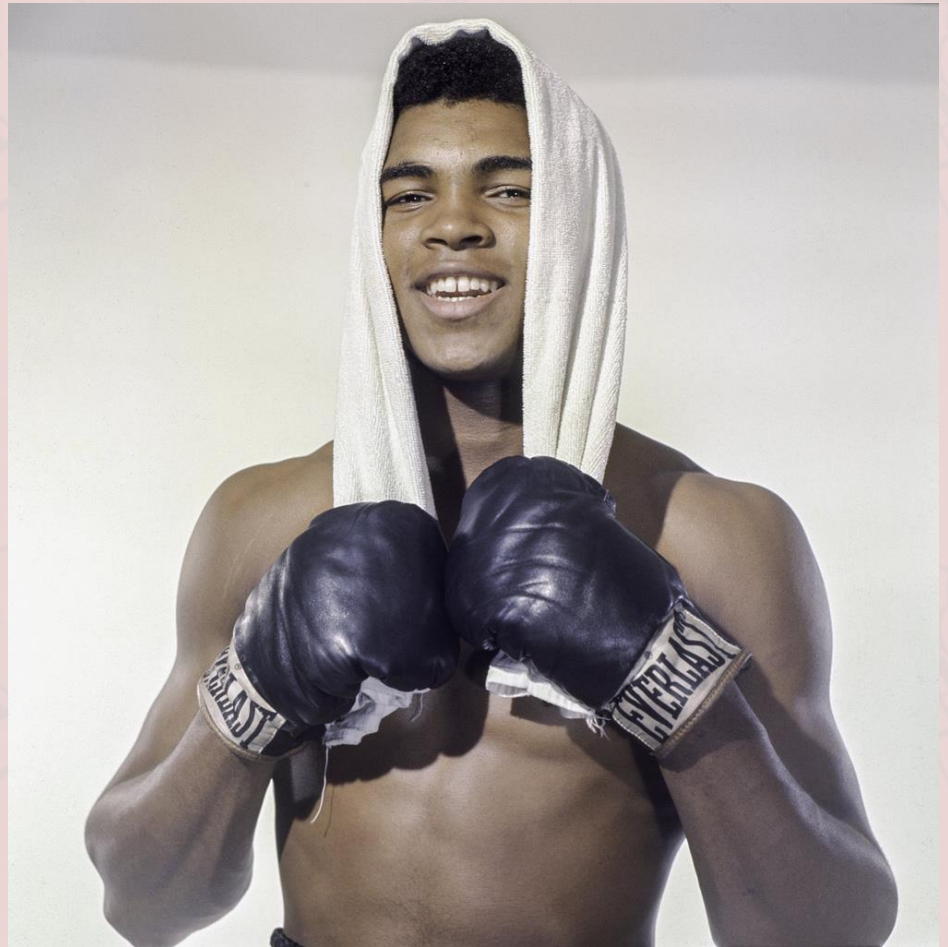
His funeral was held in his home town of Louisville, Kentucky.

Muhammad Ali's Legacy

Muhammad Ali is often considered to be the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time.

In 1999, Muhammad Ali was voted BBC Sport's Personality of the Century.

He is also remembered as an inspirational civil rights activist. He tirelessly campaigned for the civil rights of black people, during a time when people were often discriminated against because of their race.

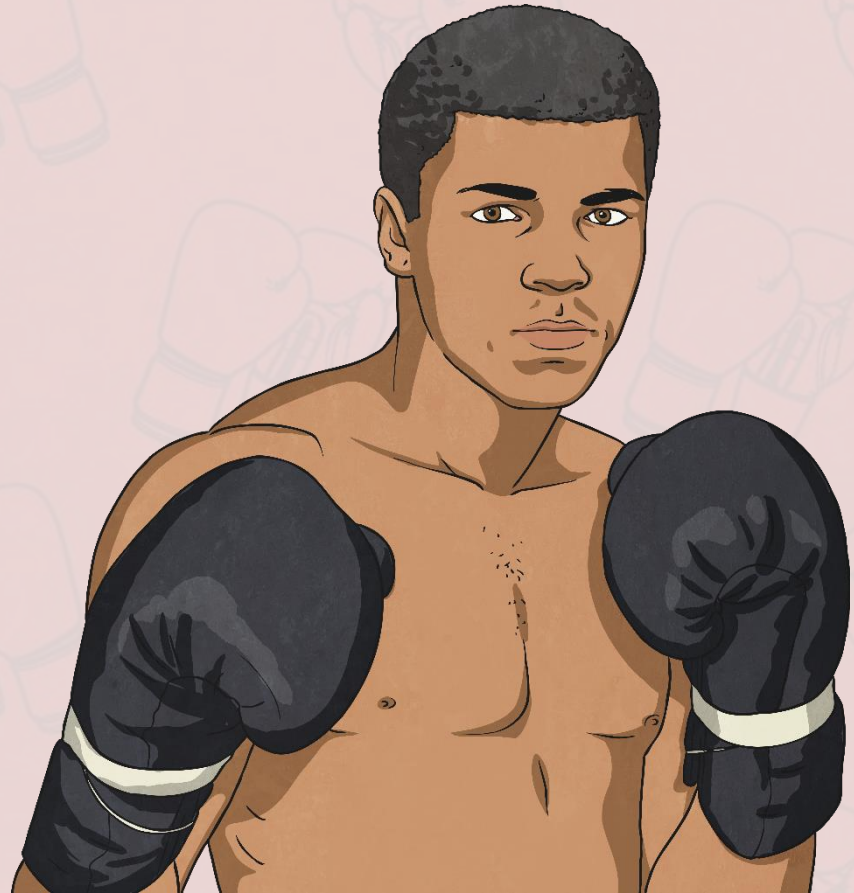


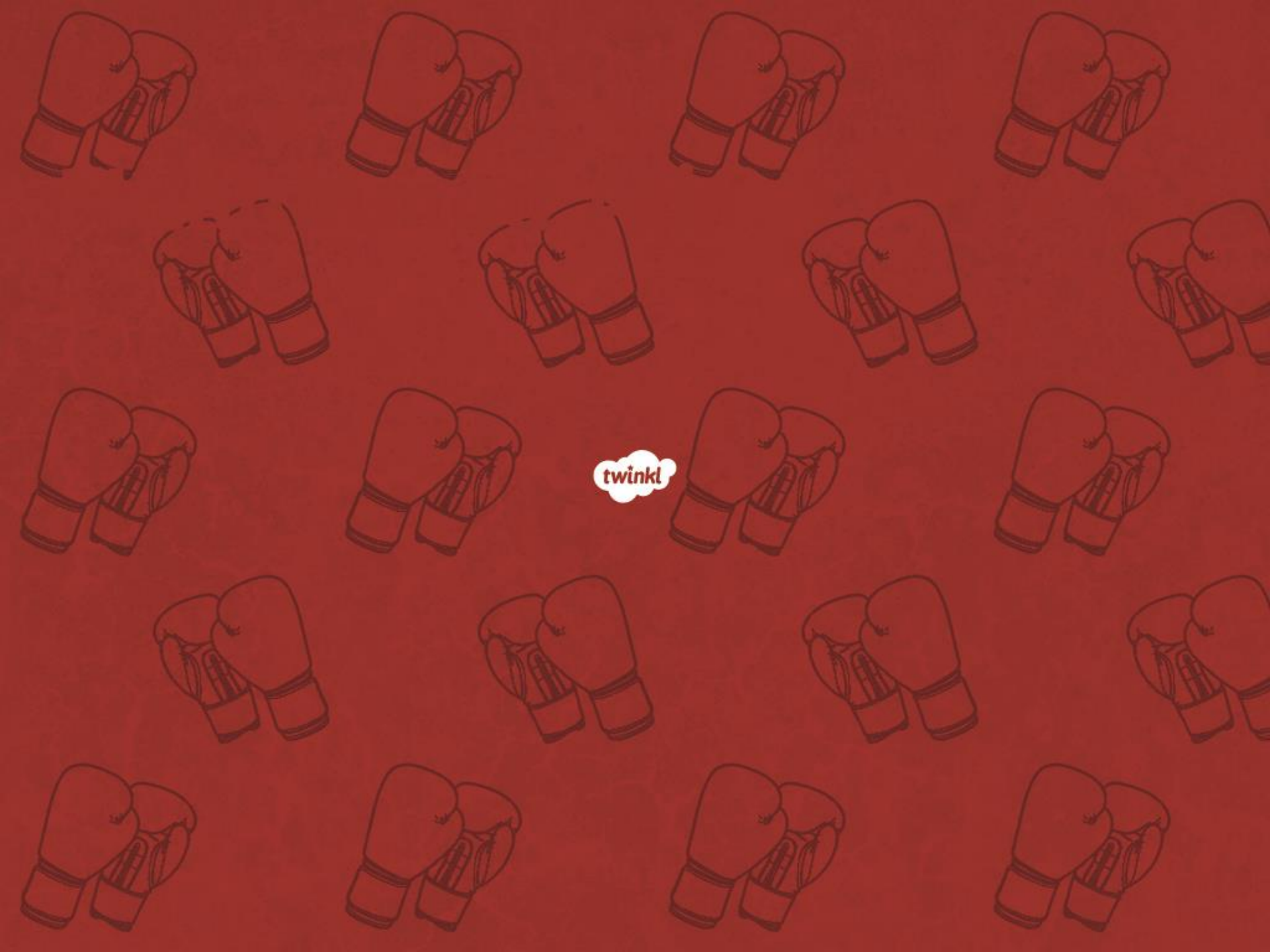
Muhammad Ali's Legacy

Muhammad Ali always stood up for his beliefs and he continues to be an inspiration to many, even after his death.

Muhammad Ali is often said to have transcended sport, which means his achievements and legacy go beyond boxing.

In Louisville, Kentucky, the non-profit Muhammad Ali Centre displays his boxing memorabilia and is also a cultural centre.





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