

## LESSON PLAN #2

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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS  
Education Service Cooperative

### 1. Descriptive Data

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Area: Civics/AR History  
Unit Title: U.S. Constitution/Civics

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade Level: 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
Lesson Title: Challenging the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment

### 2. Standards, Goals, & Objectives (National Middle School Association Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)

*Standards (list local, state, or national standards which will be met upon completion of this lesson):*

#### Lesson Goal(s):

- Engage students in lively analysis and discussion of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as it applies to freedom of speech and religion
- Challenge students to understand another person's point of view

#### Lesson Objective(s):

##### **Civics**

**PD.3.C.1:** Evaluate rights and responsibilities of citizens in the United States.

**PD.4.C.3:** Examine the amendments to the U.S. Constitution in order to determine how the roles of citizens and the federal and state governments have changed over time (e.g., Bill of Rights, incorporation of states' rights into government, interpretation, due process, voting rights)

**PD.4.C.7:** Construct arguments analyzing citizens' rights protected by the U.S. Constitution and constitutional amendments using multiple sources

##### **AR History (7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

**H.7.AH.7-8.8:** Analyze social, economic, and political effects of the Civil Rights Movement on various regions in Arkansas from multiple perspectives (e.g., integration, state legislation)

##### **AR History (9-12<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

**Era5.5.AH.9-12.4:** Analyze the social, economic, and political effects of the Civil Rights Movement in various regions of Arkansas using *primary* and *secondary sources* from multiple perspectives (e.g., segregation; voting; integration of Fayetteville, Hoxie, and Little Rock School Districts; federal and state legislation)

**Era6.6.AH.9-12.4:** Analyze ways that Arkansans addressed a variety of public issues by using or challenging local, state, national, and international laws

##### **African-American History (9-12)**

**IE.6.AAH.2:** Examine the various influences of African Americans on social change using *primary* and *secondary sources* from multiple perspectives (e.g., migration, feminism, military, social organizations)

**JU.7.AAH.2:** Identify unresolved social, economic, and political challenges for African American men and women from 1970 to the present using a variety of sources representing multiple perspectives

### 3. Background

Muhammad Ali's story of a prizefighter and boxer are known largely for his success in the ring, but students should also know about his successful challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court. Prizefighting has been characterized as a true test of skill, courage, intelligence, and manhood while boxing champions have also become symbols of national and often racial superiority. On October 29, 1960, Cassius Clay fought in his first professional bout as a boxer and continued winning throughout the decade. He earned nicknames such as "Louisville Lip" and "Mighty Mouth" because of his outspokenness and personality both in and out of the boxing ring. By 1964, at the age of just twenty-two years old, he became the world heavyweight boxing champion by defeating the incumbent champion Sonny Liston. Clay soon joined the Nation of Islam, abandoned his "slave name," and started to go by Muhammad Ali during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. His biggest fight then came from his stance against the federal government in 1966 when he refused to be drafted in the U.S. military to fight in the Vietnam War. Ali cited his religious beliefs and personal conviction of being opposed to the U.S. involvement in war as his refusal to be drafted. He publicly stated, "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullet on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?" He later added, "Man, I ain't go no quarrel with them Viet Cong." In April of 1967, he was arrested and found guilty of refusing to serve in the U.S. military. He was later suspended from boxing and stripped of his titles and license to box. Unable to practice his profession, Ali began touring the country and speaking at colleges/universities about Nation of Islam, civil rights, and other things of personal interest. Five years after his initial arrest, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his in a landmark case *Clay v. United States* (1971) where a unanimous Supreme Court ruled the federal government had violated Ali's "conscientious objector" exemption which was protected by the First Amendment. "For less than a week in March 1969, the world's most famous former heavyweight champion toured the state of Arkansas" (pg. 127, Demirel)

### 4. Procedure

Grouping for lesson:   X   whole group    \_\_\_\_\_ small group      X   individual

\*Assign reading as homework before class: pages 127-163, chapter 18, "Ali in Arkansas," *African-American Athletes in Arkansas: Muhammad Ali's Tour, Black Razorbacks, & Other Forgotten Stories* by Evin Demirel (ISBN: 978-0-9990083-1-7)

(2-5 minutes) **SET:**

- (1) Ask the class: "Given recent protests of professional athletes taking a knee during the national anthem, who has heard of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Clay vs. United States* and its crossover between sports and politics? Have copies of the case (synopsis) for students to read. Ask them to summarize the main points.
- (2) Ask the class: "When can the U.S. government limit your right to speech and/or religion?" Have students read the Bill of Rights first and ask them to identify the right to be discussed. Then ask Question 2. Have 1 spokesperson per group summarize student responses. (ICivics (<https://www.icivics.org/>) has a great "Do I Have a Right?" interactive game. Students could play the free speech game and compare the group(s) results, as well as what they take away regarding government and school limits on this right.)
- (3) Allow for students to provide some thoughtful responses. Some sample suggestions might be: 1-NEVER; 2-in times of war; 3-when it hurts another person; 4-if it harms anyone,

including the person doing it (i.e. snake-handling or religious drugs); 5-when the government disagrees; 6-other response

**(30-40 minutes) Activity:**

- (1) As a class, review Chapter Eighteen – “Ali in Arkansas” from *African-American Athletes in Arkansas* by Evin Demirel.
  - Students can be assigned this as homework the day before or can be read aloud in Class/small groups together.
- (2) After reading, pose the following questions to all students and ask for sample responses:
  - a. “By refusing draft induction into the Vietnam War and advocating for the conversion of African Americans to a Black Power-infused brand of Islam,” what did the author cite as “two of the nation’s predominantly white-led pillars of authority” was Ali “blatantly rejecting? (A: *the federal government and the Christian Church- pg. 127-128*)
  - b. Led a brief discussion of how these two pillars are predominantly white.
  - c. Why did the AR State Senate and Pulaski Businessmen’s Association publicly protest Ali’s speaking invitation to the UA-Fayetteville? (A: *He was a draft dodger and because “students should not be exposed to alien thoughts until they had had ample doses of patriotism” and because many incorrectly identified “Black Power” as communist.*)
  - d. What was the reason Ali told a state newspaper as to why he ultimately decided to speak at the UA? (A: *Because the students wanted him and he was more popular than anybody in the state.*)
  - e. How did Ali define the differences between a “black man” and a “Negro?” (A: *“A black man = African-American who had accepted Islam” and a “Negro = black people still oppressed by white society.”*)
  - f. About how many UA students attended Ali’s speech on Wednesday, March 13, 1969? (A: *4,000 including roughly 200 African-Americans.*)
  - g. Surprisingly, why did Ali support Alabama Governor George Wallace’s 1968 bid for U.S. president? (A: *They both agreed races should be separated.*)
  - h. What was the underlying theme of Ali’s 1969 UA speech in Fayetteville? (A: *separatism of races; nonviolence*)
  - i. Other questions to pose: Are there circumstances where races should be separate? What could be the consequences of separatism?
- (3) Review the First Amendment (handout). Answer the following questions independently to assess knowledge of the First Amendment and how it applies to the Ali situation in 1969.
  - a. What is the purpose of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? (A: *Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press, Petition, & Assembly*)
  - b. Explain how Ali’s speeches in Arkansas connects to the First Amendment? (Let students determine which freedoms the speech addressed.)
    - i. A: *Speech – Talking to UA students; Press – His interviews with local papers; Religion – Refusing the draft/Preaching Islam; Assembly – Gathering of black students at UAPB, UALR, & UA; answers may vary*
  - c. If Muhammad Ali were alive today, what do you think he would say about professional athletes refusing to stand during the playing of the national anthem today? Please explain and support your answers with evidence from the text.

**(5-10 minutes) Closure:** Individually, have students compose a hypothetical 140-character tweet from President Trump reacting to either Ali’s 1967 arrest for refusing to be drafted or public resistance to his 1969 UA-Fayetteville speech.

**5. Assessment of Student Learning**

Teacher observation, student feedback, & questions & answers; Plus, Trump tweet responses

**6. Modifications for special needs and/or gifted**

Group/Class activity, reading prompts aloud as a class, cooperative learning, optional opportunity for lesson extension and/or reflection.

**7. Materials & Equipment Needed**

-Book: *African-American Athletes in Arkansas: Muhammad Ali's Tour, Black Razorbacks, & Other Forgotten Stories* by Evin Demirel (ISBN: 978-0-9990083-1-7)

**8. Lesson Extension & Reflection**

Students could role play various historical or modern reactions to Muhammad Ali's refusal to be drafted like President Trump's tweet or engage students in a discussion of post-9/11 sensitivities and reactions to Ali's advocating of Islam.