

American Sporting Heroes

The United States team has won lots of medals in the Olympics. Read on to find out about four amazing people who have all been a part of the US team.



Name: Jesse Owens

Born: 12th September 1913

Sport: track and field events



Jesse Owens was an incredible athlete who won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics.

The 1936 Olympics took place in Germany. At the time, Germany was ruled by Adolf Hitler. Many people think that Hitler wanted to use the Olympics to show how white athletes were better than everyone else. When Jesse Owens won four gold medals, it helped to prove Hitler wrong.

Did You Know...?

When Jesse Owens broke the world record for the long jump, it wasn't beaten for another 25 years!

Name: Muhammed Ali (born Cassius Clay Jr)

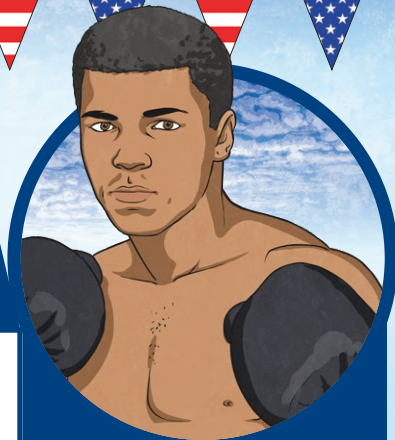
Born: 17th January 1942

Sport: boxing



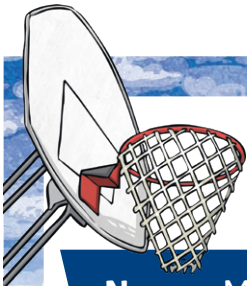
Muhammad Ali was a successful boxer who won a gold medal at the Olympics in 1960.

Muhammad's bike was stolen when he was 12 years old. The police officer who spoke to Muhammad was called Joe Martin. He trained young boxers in his spare time and he asked Muhammad if he wanted to join in. With this training, Muhammad won his first boxing match in 1954.

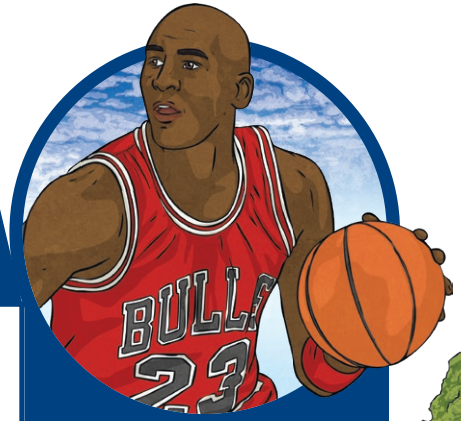


Did You Know...?

Muhammad won a total of 56 boxing matches.



Name: Michael Jordan
Born: 17th February 1963
Sport: basketball



Michael Jordan is often called one of the greatest basketball players of all time. He has won two Olympic gold medals.

When he was at university, Michael played for the basketball team. They won lots of games and he was offered a place in a famous basketball team called the Chicago Bulls. While he was playing for them, the team won six championships.

Did You Know...?

Michael Jordan is 1.98 metres tall!



Name: Serena Williams
Born: 26th September 1981
Sport: tennis



Did You Know...?
 Serena's favourite animals are dogs and tigers.

Serena Williams is an amazing tennis player who has won a total of four Olympic gold medals.

Serena's father started to teach her how to play tennis when she was three years old. She has won more Grand Slam tennis tournaments than any other player. Three of Serena's gold medals were won while playing with her sister, Venus.



Questions

1. Who played for the Chicago Bulls? Tick one.

- Jesse Owens
- Muhammad Ali
- Michael Jordan
- Serena Williams

2. Draw **four** lines to match each person with their sport.

Jesse Owens	•
Muhammad Ali	•
Michael Jordan	•
Serena Williams	•

•	boxing
•	track and field events
•	tennis
•	basketball

3. How old was Serena Williams when her father started to teach her how to play tennis? Tick one.

- three
- four
- five
- six

4. In what year did Jesse Owens win four Olympic medals? Tick one.

- 1913
- 1936
- 1942
- 1963

5. Fill in the missing words.

Muhammad Ali's _____ was stolen when he was _____ years old.

6. How many Olympic gold medals has Michael Jordan won?

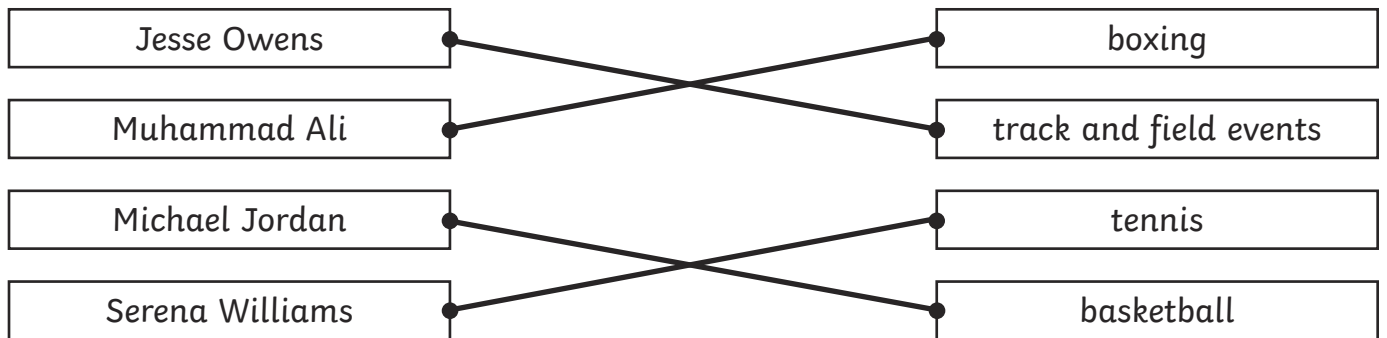
7. Do you think that Serena Williams enjoys playing tennis? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Who played for the Chicago Bulls? Tick one.

- Jesse Owens
- Muhammad Ali
- Michael Jordan**
- Serena Williams

2. Draw **four** lines to match each person with their sport.



3. How old was Serena Williams when her father started to teach her how to play tennis? Tick one.

- three**
- four
- five
- six

4. In what year did Jesse Owens win four Olympic medals? Tick one.

- 1913
- 1936**
- 1942
- 1963

5. Fill in the missing words.

Muhammad Ali's **bike** was stolen when he was **12** years old.

6. How many Olympic gold medals has Michael Jordan won?

Michael Jordan has won two Olympic gold medals.

7. Do you think that Serena Williams enjoys playing tennis? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Serena Williams does enjoy playing tennis because she started when she was three years old and she is still playing, which she probably wouldn't do if she didn't enjoy it.

American Sporting Heroes

Since 1896, the United States team has won more medals in the Olympics than any other country. Behind every medal is a sporting hero. Read on to find out about four inspirational American sportspeople.



Jesse Owens



Jesse Owens was born on 12th September 1913. He is a track and field athlete who won four gold medals at the Olympics in 1936.

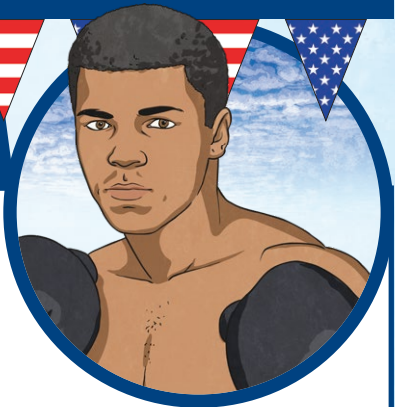
The Olympics in 1936 were held in Germany. At the time, the country was ruled by Adolf Hitler. It is thought that Hitler wanted to use the Olympics to show that white athletes were better than all others. Many people believe that Jesse winning four gold medals helped to prove Hitler wrong.

Did You Know...?

During the Olympics, German athlete Luz Long gave Jesse some important advice that helped Jesse to win the long jump competition. Luz came second and the two athletes became good friends.

Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay Jr) was born on 17th January 1942. He was a highly successful boxer who won a gold medal at the Olympics in 1960.



When he was 12 years old, Muhammad's bike was stolen. The police officer who spoke to Muhammad trained young boxers in his spare time and he invited Muhammad to join in. With the training, Muhammad won his first boxing match in 1954.

Did You Know...?

In 1998, Muhammad was given an award by the president of the United States for promoting peace.

Michael Jordan

Michael Jordan was born on 17th February 1963. He is often called one of the greatest basketball players of all time. In total, he won two gold medals at the Olympics in 1984 and 1992.

While he was at university, Michael's team won the championship and he was offered a place on the NBA (National Basketball Association) team called the Chicago Bulls. While Michael was playing for them, the team won a total of six championships.



Did You Know...?

Michael Jordan is 1.98 metres tall and he can jump straight up into the air at a height of over one metre!



Serena Williams

Serena Williams was born on 26th September 1981. Serena has won more Grand Slam tennis tournament titles than any other player and she has won a total of four Olympic gold medals. Three of the Olympic medals were won in doubles matches alongside her sister, Venus.

Serena began to learn how to play tennis when she was three years old. She was taught by her father, who read books and watched videos on how to play tennis. By 1999, she had won her first Grand Slam tournament.

Did You Know...?

Serena's favourite animals are dogs and tigers.

Questions

1. Who was given an award for promoting peace? Tick one.

- Jesse Owens
- Muhammad Ali
- Michael Jordan
- Serena Williams

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Muhammad Ali won a gold medal at the Olympics.
- Michael Jordan won his first Olympic gold medal.
- Serena Williams won her first Grand Slam tournament.
- Jesse Owens won four Olympic gold medals

3. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

Jesse Owens	won his first match in 1954.
Muhammad Ali	plays doubles matches with her sister, Venus.
Michael Jordan	was helped by Luz Long.
Serena Williams	played for the Chicago Bulls.

4. Which **two** sportspeople have won four Olympic gold medals? Tick **two**.

- Jesse Owens
- Muhammad Ali
- Michael Jordan
- Serena Williams

5. Look at the section on **Muhammad Ali**.

Find and copy a group of words that tell you that Muhammad Ali was **a really good boxer**.

6. How old was Serena Williams when she started to learn how to play tennis?

7. Do you think that Muhammad Ali would have become a boxer if his bike hadn't been stolen?
Explain your answer.

8. Summarise what you have learnt about Michael Jordan using 15 words or fewer.

Answers

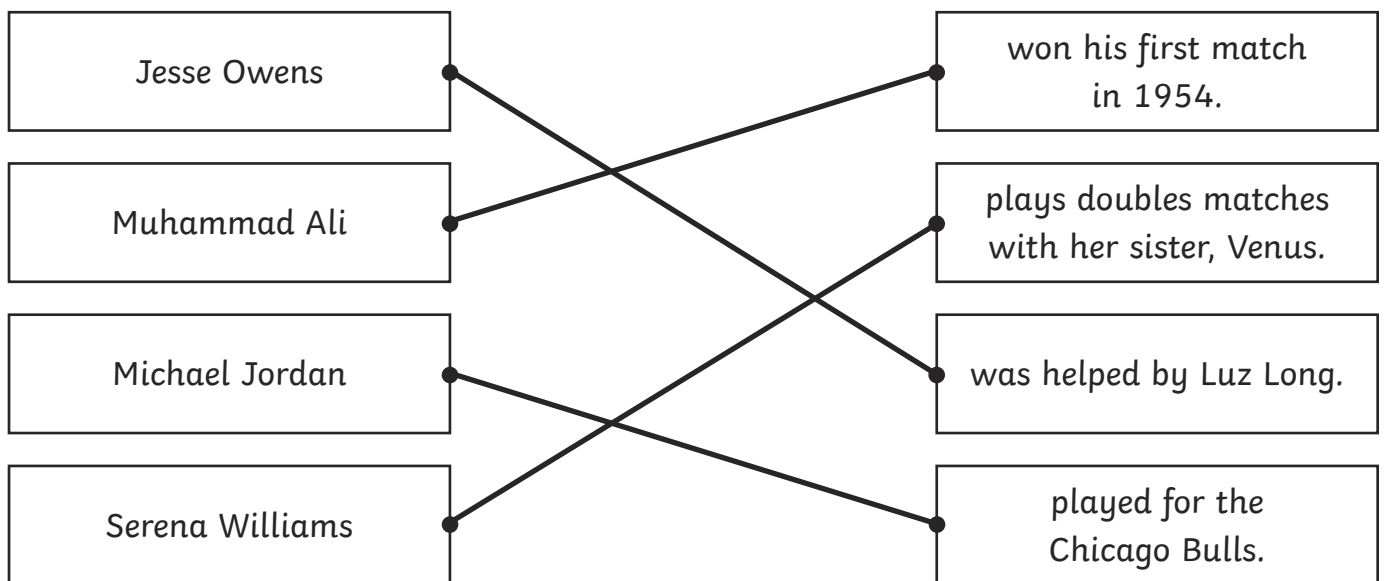
1. Who was given an award for promoting peace? Tick one.

- Jesse Owens
 Muhammad Ali
 Michael Jordan
 Serena Williams

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2 Muhammad Ali won a gold medal at the Olympics.
 3 Michael Jordan won his first Olympic gold medal.
 4 Serena Williams won her first Grand Slam tournament.
 1 Jesse Owens won four Olympic gold medals

3. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.



4. Which **two** sportspeople have won four Olympic gold medals? Tick **two**.

- Jesse Owens**
 Muhammad Ali
 Michael Jordan
 Serena Williams

5. Look at the section on **Muhammad Ali**.

Find and copy a group of words that tell you that Muhammad Ali was **a really good boxer**.
a highly successful boxer

6. How old was Serena Williams when she started to learn how to play tennis?

Serena Williams was three years old when she started to learn how to play tennis.

7. Do you think that Muhammad Ali would have become a boxer if his bike hadn't been stolen?
Explain your answer.

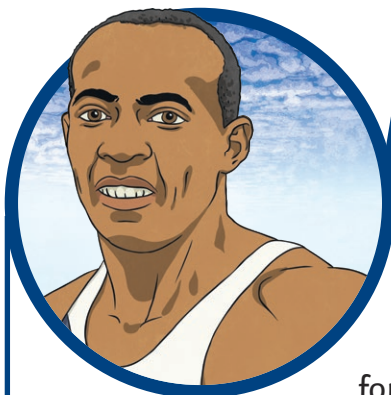
Pupils' own responses, such as: I don't think that Muhammad Ali would have become a boxer if his bike hadn't been stolen. This is because he only met the police officer who trained him because of his stolen bike.

8. Summarise what you have learnt about Michael Jordan using 15 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: He is a basketball player who has won two gold medals and six championships.

American Sporting Heroes

Since 1896, the United States team has won more medals in the Olympics than any other country. Behind every medal is an incredible sporting hero. Read on to find out about four American sportspeople who contributed to the incredible medal count.



Jesse Owens



Jesse Owens was born on 12th September 1913. He is a celebrated track and field athlete and he won a total of four gold medals at the Olympics in 1936. One year before the Olympics, Jesse set a world record for the long jump, which was undefeated for 25 years.

The Olympics in 1936 were held in Berlin. At the time, Germany was under the rule of Adolf Hitler. It is thought that Hitler hoped to use the games to showcase how white athletes were superior to all others. Many people believe that Jesse winning four gold medals helped to disprove Hitler's ideas.

Did You Know...?

During the Olympics, German athlete Luz Long gave Jesse some advice on his technique which helped Jesse to win the long jump competition. Luz came second and the two athletes became close friends.

Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay Jr) was born on 17th January 1942. He is considered to be one of the greatest boxers of all time and he won a gold medal at the 1960 Olympics in Rome.



When he was 12 years old, Muhammad's bike was stolen. While speaking to a police officer, Muhammad mentioned how he was angry at the person who took it. The police officer trained young boxers in his spare time and he invited Muhammad to join in. With the training, Muhammad won his first boxing match in 1954.

Did You Know...?

In 1998, Muhammad was given an award by the president of the United States for promoting peace.

Michael Jordan

Michael Jordan was born on 17th February 1963. He is often called one of the greatest basketball players of all time. In total, he won two gold medals at the Olympics in 1984 and 1992.

While he was at university, Michael's team won the championship and he was offered a place on the NBA (National Basketball Association) team called the Chicago Bulls. While Michael was playing for them, the team won a total of six championships.



Did You Know...?

Michael Jordan is 1.98 metres tall and he can jump straight up into the air at a height of over one metre!



Serena Williams

Serena Williams was born on 26th September 1981. Throughout her successful career, Serena has won more Grand Slam tennis tournament titles than any other player. In addition, she has also won a total of four Olympic gold medals. Three of these were in doubles matches alongside her sister, Venus.

At the age of three, Serena began to learn how to play tennis. She was taught by her father who wanted his youngest daughters to be successful. By the time she was ten years old, Serena was ranked as the best tennis player in her age category.

Did You Know...?

Serena's favourite animals are dogs and tigers.

Questions

1. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

Jesse Owens...

used to be called
Cassius Clay Jr.

Muhammad Ali...

has won three Olympic
medals alongside her sister.

Michael Jordan...

set a world record for
the long jump.

Serena Williams...

is 1.98 metres tall.

2. In what year did Muhammad Ali compete in the Olympics? Tick one.

- 1936
 1942
 1954
 1960

3. ...**Jesse set a world record for the long jump, which was undefeated for 25 years.**

What does the word **undefeated** mean in this sentence?

4. Fill in the missing words.

German _____ Luz Long gave Jesse Owens some advice on
his technique which helped Jesse to win the _____ competition.

5. What has Serena Williams won more of than any other player?

6. What evidence can you find that the author is inspired by these sportspeople?

7. Which sportsperson would you most like to meet? Tick one.

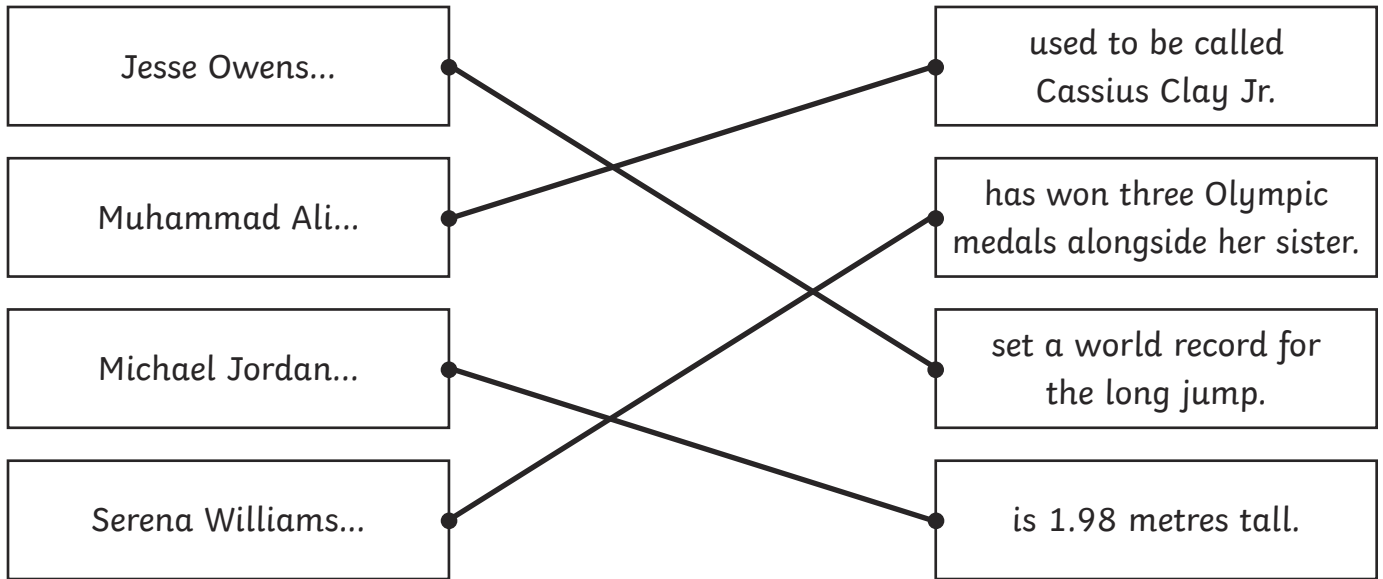
- Jesse Owens
- Serena Williams
- Michael Jordan
- Muhammad Ali

Explain your answer.

8. What evidence can you find that the author is inspired by these sportspeople?

Answers

1. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.



2. In what year did Muhammad Ali compete in the Olympics? Tick one.

- 1936
- 1942
- 1954
- 1960**

3. ...**Jesse set a world record for the long jump, which was undefeated for 25 years.**

What does the word **undefeated** mean in this sentence?

The word undefeated means that the world record was not beaten for 25 years.

4. Fill in the missing words.

German **athlete** Luz Long gave Jesse Owens some advice on his technique which helped Jesse to win the **long jump** competition.

5. What has Serena Williams won more of than any other player?

Serena Williams has won more Grand Slam tennis tournament titles than any other player.

6. What evidence can you find that the author is inspired by these sportspeople?

Pupils' own responses, such as: In the text, the author has used words like 'celebrated', 'the greatest' and 'successful'. They have also titled the text 'Sporting Heroes'. All of these things make it seem as though the author is inspired by these sportspeople.

7. Which sportsperson would you most like to meet? Tick one.

Accept any ticked response provided that a reasonable explanation is given, such as: I would most like to meet Michael Jordan and I would ask him how he got to be so good. This is because he is considered to be one of the greatest basketball players of all time and I want to know how he got to that point.

8. What evidence can you find that the author is inspired by these sportspeople?

Pupils' own responses, such as: If Muhammad Ali's bike hadn't been stolen, he might not have met the police officer who trained young boxers. If he hadn't have met him, Muhammad might never have started training to become a boxer. When his bike got stolen, it started the events that led to him becoming a great boxer.