

ACTIVITIES

Chapter 1

Before you read

- 1 Do you like to watch boxing? Why (not)? Discuss the sport with another student. Who is or was your country's greatest boxer?
- 2 Look at the Word List at the back of the book. Check the meaning of unfamiliar words; then discuss these questions with another student. Use the Internet or library books to help you if you don't know much about boxing.
 - a Who is or was the greatest heavyweight champion in the history of boxing? Why?
 - b In your opinion, how many rounds should there be in an amateur boxing fight? How many should there be in a professional fight? Why?
 - c If a boxer is being hit often and is not throwing any punches back, should the referee always stop the fight? Why (not)?
 - d What would you like to be the world champion of? Why?
 - e When is the last time you heard people booing? Why were they booing?
 - f In your opinion, which of these jobs is the hardest? Why?
butcher priest worker at the docks boxer
- 3 Read the Introduction to the book and answer these questions.
 - a What caused hard times in the U.S. in the 1930s?
 - b How was Jim Braddock like millions of other unlucky Americans?
 - c Why did actor Russell Crowe want to play Braddock?
 - d How did Crowe train for the film?

While you read

- 4 Are these sentences correct? Write *yes* or *no*.
 - a Jim Braddock is expected to beat Tuffy Griffiths.. . . .
 - b Braddock wins the fight by a knockout.. . . .
 - c Joe Gould decides which boxers fight at Madison Square Garden.. . . .
 - d Braddock was born in New Jersey.. . . .

- e Braddock still lives in New Jersey.. . . .
- f Jim likes to go to clubs after a fight.. . . .
- g Joe Gould likes to see Mae Braddock.. . . .
- h Mae refused to marry Jim until he had enough money.. . . .
- i Jim and Mae have three children.. . . .
- j Mae goes to all of Jim's fights.. . . .

After you read

- 5 Discuss how these people feel about each other. Give reasons for your answers.
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| a Jim and Joe | c Jim and Mae |
| b Joe and Jimmy Johnston | d Joe and Mae |
- 6 Describe Mae's attitude to Jim's job. How would you feel in her situation?

Chapters 2-3

Before you read

- 7 Life changed for many Americans on October 29, 1929. What do you think happened on that day? What happened afterward?
- 8 You are going to read about the Braddock family's money problems. How do you think these will affect Jim? How will they affect Mae?
- 9 Jim's next fight is described as "an embarrassment." Why, do you think?

While you read

- 10 Write the name of the character.
- a Who is afraid about Jim's next fight?
 - b Who pulls out a gun at the docks?
 - c Who steals food?
 - d Who promises that the Braddocks will
never send their children away?
 - e Who says he will buy Jim an ice cream?
 - f Whose hand is broken?
 - g Who takes away Jim's license?
 - h Who tells Jim, "It's finished"?

After you read

- 11 How has life changed for Jim and his family since 1928? Make a list and compare it with the lists of other students.
- 12 Why are these important to the story?
Jim and Mae's wedding picture a jar a piece of meat
- 13 Work in pairs and have these conversations.

Student A: You are Jim Braddock. Pick one of these times in the story and tell your friend what your thoughts are.

- a waiting for work at the docks
- b before the Feldman fight
- c after you lost your license

Student B: You are Jim's friend. Ask questions.

Chapters 4-5

Before you read

- 14 Look at the titles of these chapters and discuss the questions.
 - a What will Jim's new life be like? How do you think he will earn money for his family with a broken right hand?
 - b What promise will be broken? Who will break it?
- 15 In Chapter 5, Jimmy goes back to Madison Square Garden, but not as a boxer. Why do you think he goes there? Think of some possible reasons.

While you read

- 16** Number these events in the correct order, from 1 to 10.
- a** Jim sells his boxing shoes at the gym..
 - b** Joe Gould gives Jim money..
 - c** Mae takes the children to her relatives..
 - d** Jim is chosen to work at the docks..
 - e** The electricity is turned back on..
 - f** The Braddocks' electricity is cut off..
 - g** Jim goes to the relief office..
 - h** Jim covers his cast with black shoe polish..
 - i** Jim and Mike help a young couple..
 - j** Jim meets Mike Wilson..

After you read

17 Why:

- a does Mike Wilson help Jim at the docks?
- b doesn't Joe Gould speak to Jim when he sees him at the gym?
- c does Mae take the children to her relatives?
- d does Jim become angry that the children are gone?

18 You are Jim Braddock. Pick one of these times in the story and tell the class your thoughts.

- a working at the docks
- b seeing Joe Jeannette at the gym
- c in the line at the relief office
- d when the electricity is turned back on

Chapters 6-7

Before you read

19 Discuss these questions with another student.

- a In Chapter 6, Joe Gould offers Jim something. What will this be?
- b In Chapter 7, Joe Gould says, "Where have you been, Jimmy Braddock?" Why do you think he says this?

While you read

20 Read the questions and circle YES or NO.

- | | | | |
|---|--|-----|----|
| a | Is it Howard's birthday? | YES | NO |
| b | Had Jim hit the priest? | YES | NO |
| c | Does Jim hit Mike Wilson? | YES | NO |
| d | Is Mae happy about the children boxing? | YES | NO |
| e | Is Mae happy about the Griffin fight? | YES | NO |
| f | Does Jim train hard for the Griffin fight? | YES | NO |
| g | Does Jim fight Corn Griffin on an empty stomach? | YES | NO |
| h | Does Sporty Lewis think that Jim will win? | YES | NO |
| i | Does Jim beat Griffin by a knockout? | YES | NO |
| j | Does Max Baer beat Primo Carnera? | YES | NO |

After you read

21 Answer these questions.

- a Why is there a party at the church?
- b Why does Joe come to see Jim at his apartment?
- c Why do the Braddock children go back to the butcher shop?
- d Why does Joe Gould look for a spoon?
- e Why does Sporty Lewis get a surprise?
- f Why can't Joe Gould watch Max Baer's fight?

22 The writer includes a description of the fight between Max Baer and Primo Carnera. Why? What effect does this scene have? Discuss your opinion with another student.

Chapters 8-9

Before you read

23 Which of these do you think will happen in the next two chapters?

- a Jim leaves his job at the docks.
- b Mae tries to make Jim stop fighting.
- c Jim loses his next fight.
- d Jim becomes the challenger for the heavyweight title of the world.

While you read

24 Match the speakers with the words.

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| a | "Put it on your eyes." | Jim Braddock |
| b | "Why didn't you tell me you were going to win again?" | Joe Gould |
| c | "You said it was one fight." | Joe Jeannette |
| d | "I'll get him a fight if it's the last thing I do." | John Henry Lewis |
| e | "You've been training, Jimmy." | Mae Braddock |
| f | "I can't win if you don't support me." | Max Baer |
| g | "He isn't the same guy." | Mike Wilson |
| h | "The guy's a loser." | Rosy Braddock |

After you read

25 Answer these questions.

- a Why are the men at the docks surprised to see Jim?
- b Why is Mae surprised at Joe's apartment?
- c Why is Joe Jeannette surprised when Jim starts training?
- d Why is the radio announcer surprised during the Lasky fight?

26 Imagine Mae's thoughts as she returns home after seeing Joe Gould in New York. Make notes; then have this conversation.

Student A: You are Mae. Tell Jim about your visit to Joe's apartment.

Student B: You are Jim. Ask questions. Say what you think about Joe and about Mae's visit.

Chapters 10-11

Before you read

27 In the 1930s, some people with no money lived in New York's Central Park. What do you think life was like for them?

28 In Chapter 11, Jim Braddock meets the champion, Max Baer, outside the ring. What do you think happens?

While you read

29 Circle the correct word.

- a Jim gives money back to *Joe Gould/the Newark relief office*.
- b He buys some *flowers/chocolates* for Mae.
- c Sara tells Mae that *Jim/Mike* is missing.
- d Jim looks for Mike *in Central Park/at the Newark docks*.
- e *A lot of/Few* people go to Mike's funeral.
- f Sporty Lewis asks *Mae/Jim* questions.
- g *Joe Gould/Jim Braddock* asks Jimmy Johnston to stop the film of Baer's fights.
- h *Max Baer/Jim Braddock* tells his opponent, "I don't want to hurt you."
- i Mae throws *a drink/a punch* at Max Baer.

After you read

30 Pick one of these people. Imagine what they are thinking at Mike's funeral. Discuss it with a partner.

Jim Mae Sara

31 Do you know the complete story of Cinderella? Tell the story. Explain the meaning of the name "Cinderella Man."

32 Work in pairs. Act out the conversation between Jim and Mae after they have met Max Baer at the club.

Student A: You are Mae. You are afraid that Jim will get badly hurt or killed. Ask him not to fight Baer.

Student B: You are Jim. Tell Mae why you have to fight and try to make her feel better.

Chapters 12-13

Before you read

33 It is time for the big fight. How do you think these people feel about it?

Jim Mae the Braddock children Jim's neighbors Max Baer

While you read

34 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- a Joe Jeannette thinks that the champion's ribs are weak
- b The champion is heavier than the challenger.. . . .
- c Jim's children are at their aunt's house during the fight.. . . .
- d Mae stays to watch the whole fight.. . . .
- e Max Baer is worried in the first round.. . . .
- f Baer breaks Jim's ribs in the second round.. . . .
- g The champion stays calm in the fight.

After you read

35 Discuss these questions.

- a What helps Mae to change her mind about the fight?
- b How is Jim Braddock's attitude to boxing different in 1935 than it was in 1928? Explain your answer.

Chapter 14

Before you read

- 36 How do you think these people will feel if Braddock wins? How will they feel if he loses?
Mae Ancil Hoffman Sporty Lewis
- 37 Who do you think will win the fight? Why do you think that?

While you read

- 38 Number these events in the correct order, from 1 to 6.
- a Mae listens to the fight with her children.
 - b Joe Gould jumps into the ring.
 - c The judges' decision is announced.
 - d Mae walks away from the radio.
 - e Max Baer comes over to Jim's corner.
 - f Jim takes Baer's big punch and smiles at the champion

After you read

- 39 What was Max Baer trying to do in the fight? How were Jim's attitude and fighting style different from the champion's?
- 40 In your opinion, why did poor people across the country support Jim Braddock?

Writing

- 41 You are Sporty Lewis. Write about the Braddock-Baer fight for your newspaper.
- 42 You are making the movie of *Cinderella Man*. Write a scene when Jim first sees Mae and the children after winning the title.
- 43 Imagine that you are Mae many years after the big fight. Tell Jim's story to one of your grandchildren in a letter.
- 44 You write about books for a magazine. Write about *Cinderella Man*, telling your readers why they should—or shouldn't—read the book.
- 45 You are a sports reporter for the radio and you are going to interview the heavyweight champion of the world, Jim Braddock, before his fight with Joe Louis. Write a list of the ten questions you would most like to ask.

- 46 Write a character description of one of these people:
Jim Braddock Mae Braddock Joe Gould Mike Wilson
Max Baer
Support your description with examples of the person's words or actions.
- 47 All of the people in the book are real except Mike Wilson and his family. You are the writer of the movie. Write an e-mail to the filmmakers explaining why you put this character in the story.
- 48 Think about a time in your life when you had to fight for your beliefs. Describe it in a diary page.
- 49 What does this book tell you about life in the United States in the early 1930s? Write a description of what life was like for many poor Americans at that time. Include examples from *Cinderella Man*.
- 50 Professional boxers have to be very fit. Write a weekly exercise program for a boxer or for yourself.

WORD LIST

amateur (n) someone who does something because they enjoy it, not because it is their job

announce (v) to tell people about something officially

boo (n/v) a shout showing dislike of a person or their performance

butcher (n) someone who owns or works in a shop that sells meat

cast (n) a hard cover used to protect a broken bone

challenge (v) to try to beat the best person in a sports event

champion (n) someone who is the best in a sports event

combination (n) in boxing, two or more punches that are put together

cross (n) in boxing, a punch that goes from right to left or left to right

dock (n) the place in a port where things are taken on and off ships

dodge (v) to move quickly so that something doesn't hit you

fist (n) a closed hand

foreman (n) a worker in charge of other workers

funeral (n) a religious service for someone who has just died

heavyweight (n/adj) a boxer from the heaviest weight group; a **light** heavyweight is a boxer from a lower weight group

hook (n) a curved piece of metal used for picking things up

jab (n/v) a quick punch in which a boxer's hand goes straight forward

knockout (n/adj; **knock out**, v) a hit by a boxer which is so hard that the other boxer falls down and can't get up again

nod (n/v) a movement of your head to say yes or to show agreement

opponent (n) somebody who is against you in a sports event

polish (n) something used to make things shine, for example shoes

priest (n) someone who performs religious services in some religions

punch (n/v) a hit with your closed hand

referee (n) someone who makes sure that rules are followed in sports

relief (n) money, food, or clothes given to those who need them; the feeling that you can stop worrying about something

rib (n) one of the curved bones in your chest

ring (n) a square area, surrounded by seats, where boxers fight

round (n) one stage of a boxing fight, usually lasting three minutes

sweat (n/v) liquid that comes from the skin of a hot or nervous person

wagon (n) a strong vehicle with four wheels, usually pulled by horses