

Overview

Telling Our Stories: Memoir and Biography

Personal memoir and biography are contrasted as different ways of telling the story of an individual's life. Students read memoirs from the award-winning collection *When I Was Your Age* and compare biographies of Muhammad Ali. Question-answer relationships (QAR) are introduced as way of understanding the knowledge sources that readers draw upon in understanding a passage.

LITERATURE

When I Was Your Age (Volumes I and II): Original Stories about Growing Up (Ehrlich, ed.) - Anthology of memoirs by young adult authors, including stories by Laurence Yep, Walter Dean Myers, and Avi that serve as inspiration for students' own personal writing

DK Readers: The Story of Muhammad Ali (Garrett) - Richly illustrated magazine-style biography of the controversial athlete

What the World Eats (D'Aluisio) - Photo essay documenting the food choices of 25 families around the world with provocative graphics and text

Champion: The Story of Muhammad Ali (Haskins) - Vividly illustrated biography of Muhammad Ali, used to build background knowledge in advance of reading the full-length text

A selection of various additional Muhammad Ali biographies, used to compare and contrast different authors' presentations of information about the same topic

FLUENCY TOPICS

Chinatowns, ethnic food, Boy Scouts, the New York subway system, George Washington Bridge, women and boxing, boxing and brain injuries, the Vietnam War

FOCUS

Literary analysis

- Genre features of memoir and biography, including point of view, time organization, and selection of details

Reading comprehension

- Questioning as a component of Reciprocal Teaching
- Question-answer relationships (QAR): contrasts between “right there,” “think and search,” and “on my own” questions
- Contrasting facts / details in different nonfiction texts on the same topic

Decoding

- Using syllable division patterns such as V|CV and VC|V and word parts (prefix, base, and suffix) to chunk and decode multi-syllable words

Writing

- Free writes related to the nonfiction and fiction readings
- Personal narrative inspired by one of the memoirs in *When I Was Your Age*
- Argumentative essay about the debate topic based on “Scout's Honor”
- Argumentative writing about Ali's greatest fights

Debate

- “Scout's Honor” (Avi) - Were the boys brave or stupid?
- Were Muhammad Ali's greatest fights inside or outside the ring?