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?