

Reading Resource Library Guide: All Stories Tell a Story (Memoir, Autobiography, Biography)

The following high-interest books were selected to support an exploration of memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies. Each book has a summary and additional information, such as book trailers and links to reviews, in a separate slide deck. Visit [this link](#) to access the books.

Suggestions for using the text sets and slide deck:

- ▶ Choose one of the following four topics from the quarter four slide deck to explore with your class: Supernatural/Suspense, Realistic Fiction, All Stories Tell a Story, and Action/Adventure.
- ▶ Books in the collection span different reading levels. Also included is a separate collection, “Engaging Books for Children and Families,” which offers a selection of books that can be used with children, families, and adults.
- ▶ Explore the slides for your topic in the provided link. Each book listed in the table below has a summary and additional information with links to websites that offer supplemental material. Consider selecting one book to read aloud to learners while they read their own text.
- ▶ Share the slide deck with learners and explore the books and websites. Allow learners individual time to explore the slide deck and choose a book or excerpts from several books to read.
- ▶ Decide how you will interact with these topics and texts. This information guide has suggestions for activities for the classroom, tools for teachers, and activities for families, which are starting points for larger units or creative activities to engage with topics and texts.
- ▶ The “Activities for Families” section may be copied into another document and sent home with families for engagement suggestions while reading the books.
- ▶ Use this tool to help develop and foster a reading life for your learners!

| Book Title | Author | Lexile Reading Level |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <i>Night</i> | Elie Wiesel | 570 |
| <i>They Called Us Enemy</i> | George Takei | GN 680 |
| <i>Missing</i> | Frances Itani | HL 710 |

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|---|--|------------|
| <i>Everything Sad is Untrue (a true story)</i> | Daniel Nayeri | 800 |
| <i>The Distance Between Us: A Memoir</i> * Young Reader's Edition available | Reyna Grande | 890 780 |
| <i>Educated: A Memoir</i> | Tara Westover | 870 |
| <i>Call Me American: A Memoir</i> | Abdi Nor Iftin | 900 |
| <i>First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers</i> | Loung Ung | 920 |
| <i>Almost American Girl: An Illustrated Memoir</i> | Robin Ha | N/A |
| Engaging Books for Adults and Children | | |
| <i>The Girl With a Mind for Math: The Story of Raye Montague (Amazing Scientists)</i> | Julia Finley Mosca | 460 |
| <i>Mae Among the Stars</i> | Roda Ahmed | AD 580 |
| <i>Computer Decoder: Dorothy Vaughan, Computer Scientist</i> | Andi Diehn | 620 |
| <i>Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art</i> | J.H. Shapiro | 620 |
| <i>Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions</i> | Chris Barton | 820 |
| <i>Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Real-Life Tales of Black Girl Magic</i> | Edited by award-winning journalist Lilly Workneh | 870 |
| <i>Becoming RBC: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Journey to Justice</i> | Debbie Levy | GN 910 |
| <i>The Crayon Man: The True Story of the Invention of Crayola Crayons</i> | Natascha Biebow | 960 |
| <i>El Deafo</i> | Cece Bell | N/A |

Activities for the Classroom

- ▶ At the start of the unit, discuss with learners the theme, "All stories tell a story," pointing out that we all have stories to share. Review the different ways authors tell stories through text:

- **Memoir:** a text about a memory or specific moment in time written by that person
 - **Biography:** a text about a person's life written by someone else
 - **Autobiography:** a text about a person's life written by that person
- ▶ To help learners get excited about reading nonfiction texts about a person's life, consider creating an interactive museum experience. This will help learners study the different authors in your text collection. You may want to set your room up in stations similar to an art gallery or a museum. Then, print an image of the author, have a copy of the book they have written, and a video or audio recording. Have learners engage with these items to learn more about this person and the story they have to tell. As learners weave their way through your museum, ask them to jot down which books they would like to read and consider letting them choose a text that excites them the most.
 - ▶ After learners have chosen a text about a person's life, make sure they understand some of the text features they may come across while reading this type of genre. These may include:
 - Headings and subheadings
 - Photographs with captions
 - Timelines
 - Glossary and/or index
 - Table of Contents
 - Maps and/or diagrams
 - ▶ Building background knowledge and making connections are very important when reading nonfiction texts, especially about a person's life. Consider asking readers to annotate (take notes) using a color-coded system within physical notebooks, a Google doc, or using colored Post-Its:
 - **Yellow:** Facts about the person
 - **Blue:** Important things the person did
 - **Green:** Important (or new) vocabulary
 - **Orange:** New wonderings or questions they have as a reader (things they want to know more about)
 - **Pink:** Emotions – either theirs as a reader or the author's
 - ▶ You can also use the "Read with a Pencil" strategy with your learners to help them comprehend and become more familiar with what they are reading. Use this [link](#) for ideas.
 - ▶ As a culminating activity, consider having learners participate in a living "wax" museum to feature the amazing people they have all finished reading about. The color-coded notes they took while reading will serve as their research. For the

presentation, learners will then dress as the person they read about and bring in objects, artifacts, and images that represent their author. Consider having an audience for your learners' presentations within the museum. As visitors to your museum tour each station, the learner will talk about their author as though they were that person, using sentence starters similar to [this](#). For example, if a learner read about Bill Gates, he/she may say, "Hello, my name is Bill Gates. I am best known for inventing a company called Microsoft..." when visited by a "patron" to your museum.

- ▶ If you have time, and your learners also love to write, consider asking them to write their own story. It could be an autobiography, or a memoir. Ask them, "what story is it that you have to tell?" Everyone's story is important. Consider adapting elements from [this lesson](#) to aid learners in their own story telling journey. [This lesson](#) will also give you some great exemplars, learning objectives, and guidelines to follow to help your learners succeed!

Helpful Links for Teachers

Author Learning Center:

This website has both free and paid content on a variety of topics related to writing. You will find podcasts, articles, resources and more. [Here](#) is an article about the differences between biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs.

Education World:

[This article](#), "Building on Biographies: Bringing Real-Life Stories Into Your Curriculum," will give you 10 ways to teach biographies to your learners, as well as give you additional online resources to use with your learners if you choose. Education World's main page can be accessed [here](#). This is a great resource for any educator about any topic, on any grade level!

PBS Learning Media:

PBS Experience offers educators free resources and videos for all grade levels and contents. [Here](#) is a sampling of their biography collection. You may access their main page [here](#).

Activities for Families

- ▶ Choose a book to explore from the "Engaging Books for Adults and Children" section in the table above.
- ▶ Look at the front cover with your child. Ask them, "What do you notice?" Explore the pictures and text. Have your child guess at what the story may be about using the picture on the front cover. This is called making a prediction.
- ▶ Read and discuss the book. Make connections to the books that you are reading. Explore words that your child does not understand.
- ▶ Explain that reading memoir, autobiography, or biography books means reading a true story about a real person. With that in mind, ask your child:

- Who are you most interested in reading about? Why?
- What do you hope to learn the most about this person?
- What are some character traits of the person you are interested in reading about? (Character traits are words that describe a person's personality – brave, strong, determined)
- What do you know about this person right now?
- What do you think this person had to do in order to complete what they have done?

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