Biography, Autobiography, and Memoir

*Teacher Key*

9th Lit/Comp Unit 2 Introduction – *J. Chittaro*

A **biography** is a piece of writing about a person's life.

* BIO- life; GRAPH - to write
* Biographies are written about a person's entire life, but are written by someone else. A biography about Labron James would NOT be written BY Labron - just about Labron.
* Sometimes, biographies are written about famous people without their permission or endorsement.

Biography Example: The Greatest: Muhammad Ali by Walter Dean Myers



* Clues it's a Biography
* Written in 3rd person point-of-view
* "he", "she", subject's name

An **autobiography** is a history or story of a person's life written or told by that person.

* AUTO - self; BIO - life; GRAPH – write
* An autobiography is written BY the person the story is about.
* Sometimes, when a person wants to write their autobiography, but may not have the time or skill to actually write the book, another person called a GHOST WRITER actually writes or edits the author's story. This happens with many executives, celebrities, and political leaders.

Example of Autobiography: 100% Official Justin Bieber: Just Getting Started by Justin Bieber



* Clues it's an Autobiography
* Written in 1st person point-of-view
* "I", "me", "my", "we", "our"
* Reads as if the author (Justin) were talking directly to you

**Review: Biography vs. Autobiography**

Biography:

* Tells a story about a person's life
* Usually written from birth to death/present
* Written by someone other than subject of the book
* Third person point-of-view
* Clues: "he", "she", subject's name ("Cassius Clay")

Autobiography:

* Author tells a story about their own life
* Usually written from birth to present
* Sometimes written by a ghost writer
* First person point-of-view
* Clues: "I", "me", "we", "my"
* Reads as if the author were talking to you

A **memoir** [mem-wahr] is a record of events written by a person having intimate knowledge of them and based on personal observation.

* A memoir is like an autobiography except instead of covering a person's entire life; the memoir covers an unforgettable memory of a specific time in the author's life.
* Sometimes the memoir is made into a movie.

Example of a Memoir: 127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Aron Ralston



* Clues it’s a Memoir
* First person point-of-view
* Intimate memory of the morning Aron left - he tells details that other would not have known

**Let’s Practice -** Look at the following book excerpts. Using the information you have just learned, decide whether the selection is a biography, an autobiography, or a memoir. Highlight the clues.

**Example #1:**

* This is an example of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Example #2:**



* This is an example of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Example #3:**

* This is an example of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.