

Grade: English 10

Unit: Independent Reading: Autobiography, Biography, or Memoir

Summative Assessment:

What insights are you making as you connect to the author's style and the structures of autobiography, biography, or memoir? After reading part or all of one text, review the connections, theories, and discussion topics you have tracked and recorded in your reader's notebook. Identify a single insight you have gained that might impact the way you read, the way you see the central ideas in the text, or the way you interact with others. Write 2-3 paragraphs to state the insight, explain how the author connects details across the text to promote that central idea, and explain how the author uses a single element or structure of autobiography, biography, or memoir to establish the insight.

This prompt is from the MAISA English 10 Independent Reading Unit.

Independent Reading Metacognitive Response

For this unit, I read the book *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. It is a memoir about Gilbert's trip of self-inquiry around the world following her difficult divorce. This book is an international best seller and is very popular. It was on my to-read list for a long time because it seems like a very interesting book. It involved India, which was enticing for me, because I like to read about India. I also knew that it was a memoir written more as a story, and that was very appealing to me, since straight non-fiction is not an easy read for me. I liked this book very much. It was extremely well written, funny, and insightful. I found that it was very easy to stick with, and I finished the book, from cover to cover (except I did not read the two full pages of praise). However, this was the only book I read for the unit because it was fairly long, and I created a timeline of how much to finish each week, so as to not overwhelm myself with pages, but to stay on track also. My bookmarking was done well also. I chose to mark up my book, because I like to look back and see the things I wrote right next to the text. I stayed fairly

Comment [1]: "This unit" refers to the MAISA English 10 independent reading unit, which took three weeks to complete.

Comment [2]: The writer tells the reader why she chose the book *Eat Pray Love*.

Comment [3]: The writer reflects about how the unit "went" for her. Students were encouraged to make themselves a timeline for reading, but not required to do so. This is a strategy for staying on top of reading so she could be sure to finish one book in the allotted period.

consistent, except in the last part of the book, I started to not bookmark as frequently. I still met the requirements, but was not doing it as much as I was before. I do not think I would do anything differently if I had to do it over. I liked the way I approached this unit, and I liked the book I read.

Comment [4]: The students reflect about her bookmarking while reading. Students were required to bookmark at least three passages per reading session. Students were allowed to bookmark directly in the book, if it belonged to them. During the unit, students examined their bookmarks to determine what they tend to bookmark most.

Liz Gilbert has many, many themes in her book, centering around religion, personal discovery, pleasure, and balance. But I found that the most important theme to me was her self-acceptance. Gilbert had, before this trip, a long, complicated life. She has already felt a lot and experienced a lot. She had happiness, but sadness too. She had sorrow, shame, regret, anger, all these negative emotions that weighed her down and made her mind heavy. She talked about how she learned to accept that, to accept whatever was unattractive about her. She gave each bad memory, emotion or characteristic a place in her heart. The way she described this transformation, this acceptance and this process of moving forward stuck with me. It hit me stronger than any other part of the book. I took that with me, and I tried it. I didn't get very far, because it obviously is not a one-time thing, but it made me feel different. All throughout her journey, Gilbert is learning about herself, figuring out who she is, and then accepting that and dealing with it. She talks about trying to change herself and how futile that is, that she should not think she needs to change herself in any way, and that even if she tries, she can not change. She understands that she is what she is, and she must learn to love that. I loved that she learned that. I love how across the book she talks about trying to change herself but then failing every time. When she finally understands that it cannot be done, she reaches peace. It is amazing to watch that transformation, and it makes me want to learn that too.

Comment [5]: The class discussed habits, attitudes, and strategies of readers at the beginning of the unit, and they were reinforced throughout the unit. While the writer does not expand on how she "approached this unit," she could have discussed other things she did besides choosing the book and bookmarking: Her reading log, tracking her reading speed, strategies while reading, etc.

Comment [6]: Rather than providing a summary or a "book report," the metacognitive response requires the reader/writer to think about what sticks with her from the book.

Comment [7]: The writer reflects on a single insight from the reading of this book: Acceptance. She tries to apply this insight to her own life.

Comment [8]: The writer discusses how the thematic concept of acceptance is seen across the text.

Gilbert has a very purposeful structure with her book. She divides the book into three different parts, and each part is about a different country she went to and a different underlying

Comment [9]: The class discussed the structure of autobiography, biography, or memoir and were instructed to pay attention to how their author chose to structure the book.

concept that ties back to her main theme of self-acceptance. In Italy she learns to, “Say it like you eat it,” or simplify her complicated life, and just say what she wants to say, be what she is. She learns to just do it, to be simple, and not over-complicate herself and her words. In India, she learns that trying to change herself is futile. It is what it is, and it is not changing. In Bali, she learns to balance the different parts of her life that she has discovered on this trip. Gilbert’s structure of the book shows the stages of her learning, and helps the reader to understand greater what her purpose of the book is.

Comment [10]: The writer recognizes how Gilbert structures her text and gives examples. She could have given more quotes from the text here.

Comment [11]: The writer’s theory is that Gilbert structures the text in these three, distinct parts with the intent to show her stages of learning.

Teacher’s Final Summative Comments:

The prompt for this metacognitive response is often a challenge for students. They ask questions about what, exactly, constitutes “insight.” Even more challenging for students is verbalizing how an author “connects details across the text to promote that central idea, and explain how the author uses a single element or structure of autobiography, biography, or memoir to establish the insight.” For a sophomore, this student is highly proficient at thinking about her own reading, about the insight she gained from reading, and how the writer of the memoir developed a theme. She begins with a general introduction about how the unit “went” for her and addresses her reading habits. She identifies an insight gained from reading the memoir. Finally, she specifically cites the structure of the memoir (the three sections corresponding to the three countries to which she travels) to show that she recognizes how Gilbert develops a thematic concept of acceptance across the text.

	Highly Proficient 10-9	Meets Expectations 8-7	Attempting to Meet Expectations 6-0
Focus	Addresses all aspects of prompt with a highly focused and detailed response.	Addresses prompt with a focused response.	Attempts to address prompt but lacks focus or is off-task.
Reading	Accurately presents and applies information relevant to the prompt with specific examples from the text.	Presents and applies information relevant to prompt with general accuracy and sufficient detail.	Attempts to present information relevant to task but may lack sufficient or relevant details.
Development	Presents detailed information in order to answer questions and solve problems. Concisely explains key information with detail.	Presents information in order to answer questions and solve problems. Explains key information with some detail.	Presents limited information. Ideas do not include details or examples.
Organization	Applies appropriate structure(s) to analyze.	Applies a generally effective structure to analyze.	Applies an ineffective structure; text rambles or line of thought is disconnected.
Conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion; employs language and tone appropriate to audience and purpose.	Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion; employs language and tone appropriate to audience and purpose.	Demonstrates a weak command of standard English conventions; Lacks cohesion; language and tone are inappropriate to audience and purpose.