

6th Grade - A Memoir

Knots in My Yo-Yo String by Jerry Spinelli

A memoir is a memory; a description of an event from the past. It is written in the first person; told from one person's point of view and based on the truth. It reveals the feelings of the writer and has meaning; it shows what the author learned from the experience.

Before you write your own memoir, you will read *Knot's in My Yo-Yo- String* by Jerry Spinelli. This is independent reading, but we will meet in "Literary Groups" to discuss the novel. On your own paper, write your answers to the questions below. Do not rewrite the question, but write complete sentences.

Standards: : ELA6W1 (organization and structure); ELA6W2 (competence in narrative writing); ELA6W4 (writing process); ELA6C1 (conventions of grammar); ELA6RC3(Uses content language

Resources: paper, pencil, pen, editing pen, dictionary, thesaurus

Essential Question(s):

1. How can the elements of a story relate a personal adventure?
2. How do you determine the meanings of unknown words?
3. What are some reading strategies for reading nonfiction?
4. How does the understanding of correct writing conventions help you to read and tell a story correctly?
5. How does a good writer use organization, style, usage, and mechanics to hold a reader's interest?
6. How does a rubric evaluate writing in a way to determine one's writing abilities?

P. 1-63 Due _____

1. Describe the landlady from Spinelli's first house.
2. Describe his favorite house and explain why it was his favorite.
3. Look at the first sentence on p. 10 and the last sentence on p. 11. What is strange about those two statements?
4. Explain the metaphor on p. 34.
5. Explain the simile on p. 51
6. Look at pages 51-59 and write an example of sensory details.
7. In memory, Spinelli sees Henry Doerner as just a normal kid. Why do you think he doesn't see him as the Handicapped kid he was?

P. 64-101 Due _____

1. Who is the Hoky Poky Man?
2. What two things scared Spinelli most at night?
3. What was "love leaning on a kickstand"?
4. What happened to snake? To salamander?
5. What did a bicycle mean to Jerry Spinelli?
6. How can you discover yourself on a bike?
7. Explain the simile about words and cells on p.91.
8. What did he think about dictionaries?

P. 101-136 Due _____

1. Why did Louis Darden lose the track race?
2. What happened on the basketball court?
3. Why did his mother think he had the measles after a birthday party?
4. What did he do to show his 6th grade girlfriend that he liked her?
5. What did he learn about himself as he was reading old love letters?

P. 137-138 Due _____

1. Name at least three things he lost in high school.
2. Explain the metaphor "My string was nothing but knots."
3. Why did he begin to write? P. 143
4. Choose one of the following and write a paragraph about what it meant in the book and a text-self connection.
 - a. "Words can save me."
 - b. "The true gift of Christmas was parents' selfless love."
 - c. "In those days, I was many whats. Adults have already tossed out all whats and become one."
 - d. Garfield Shainline was not the teacher but the lesson."
 - e. Yes, I believe that being a kid helped me to become a writer."

Part 2 of assignment – Your Memoir – Instructions to follow.