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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



A Farewell to Arms
Ernest Hemingway

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A Farewell to Arms

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

A Farewell to Arms

1. Before you begin your study of *A Farewell to Arms*, write an e-mail to a friend, detailing your guess about the subject of the book. A good way to begin may be

Hi,

My English teacher just assigned us a new book to read. It's called *A Farewell to Arms*. It's written by Ernest Hemingway. I've never heard of it before, but...

2. Ernest Hemingway was famous for two things: his writing and his love of the outdoors. He was an avid hunter, and he went on several African safaris to hunt exotic wild animals.

Some people find the topic of hunting very controversial. Write a short article for a newspaper, expressing your views on hunting. For example, do you approve or disapprove of it?

3. We often take book covers for granted, since we are more concerned about reading the book than keeping it as a work of art. Even so, an artist, be it a painter, graphic artist, or photographer, has probably worked very hard to design every book cover you've ever seen. As an art critic, write a review of the art used for the book cover of *A Farewell to Arms*. Be sure to include your opinion of the artwork, and use plenty of examples to support your opinion.

CHAPTER II

5. The narrator of this novel(we'll find out later that his name is Frederic Henry) remarks that "the Austrians...did not bombard the village to destroy it, but only a little in the military way." As an Austrian army commander, write a press release, defending your decision to bombard the village "only a little." You may begin like this

September 2

From: Army Commander Resnick, Austrian National Army

To: People of the Village,

We have recently started bombardments...

6. The remark that the major makes, that "all thinking men are atheists," brings to mind an age-old controversy. Many people believe that one can't be an educated, intellectual person and yet still practice a religion, because there is no scientific data to support the existence of a higher power. Others say, however, that there is no connection between religion and education: one can be highly educated and also religious.

Write a dialogue for a television talk show on which two guests argue whether "all thinking men are atheists." A good way to begin may be

Host: Welcome back to *Talk of the Town*. Today we...

A Farewell to Arms

19. Henry says that he should write home, but he hasn't written in so long that there's almost no point in trying.

As Henry, write a postcard to your family back home in the United States. Make sure to tell them of some of the things you have seen in Italy.

20. Henry wishes he could leave the war and run off to Milan with Catherine. He can just picture the two of them arriving at a hotel on the Vin Manzoni.

If you could have one wish granted, for what would you wish? Write a well-developed essay, explaining your greatest wish and why you'd like that wish to be granted.

CHAPTER X

26. Rinaldi wants Henry to get the Silver Star of valor, a decoration for heroic acts in battle, because he was wounded while under attack. In order to receive the Silver Star, however, Henry has to have been doing something brave while he was injured.

The presentation of medals of valor usually comes with some kind of certificate that details the circumstances under which the soldier showed an act of courage. Write a Medal of Honor certificate for Lt. Henry, listing his heroic deeds in battle.

27. Rinaldi and Henry are very close friends. In fact, Rinaldi says the two of them are “war brothers.” Sometimes, experiencing close circumstances like those in wars or at school or work can make people become friends, even though they may not have been friends outside of that circumstance.

Write a posting for an online psychology discussion board, explaining how people who otherwise have nothing in common can become friends simply as a result of being in a dangerous circumstance together.