**Questions to Ask Yourself While Reading Memoir**

**Identity, Voice, and Relationship**

* What kind of person does the “I” seem to be: competent, shy, aggressive, compliant?
* What roles does the “I” play in this story as it relates to gender, race, class, occupation, status in society?
* How does the “I” who is writing the memoir (older, changed) view him- or herself as a child, or younger “I”?
* Is the issue of voice or not having a voice a theme of this memoir?
* Is there more than one voice in this memoir? For instance, doe the author include other people’s perspectives on an event?
* Is this memoir about the influence of an important person or persons? How does the author interpret that influence on his or her life?

**Truth**

* Do you believe the stories and memories this author is telling you? What helps you believe the author?
* What kinds of evidence does this author give you to help you believe the memories?
* Are there things the author is clearly not writing about? Why not, do you think?
* Are there people obviously missing from the story? Why do you think so? Do you think they might have witnessed this story differently from the author?

**Memory**

* What does this author use to help remember his or her life- objects, history, places, photographs, childhood stories, interviews with family members?
* Does this author claim there are things he or she cannot remember?
* Does this author use the concept of memory itself as a theme of the story?

**Time**

* How does the author organize time in this story? Does this memoir tell a chronological story, or does it skip around in time?
* What effect do the gaps in time have?
* About what age do you think the author was when he or she wrote this story? Does this author tell you inside the story?
* Does the author write the memoir from different periods in his or her life? What effect do the different time periods have?

**Structure**

* What type of structure does this memoirist use- chronological narrative; confessional; inciting moment; the self set in historical, social, or political context?
* Where does the story begin and end? What effect do those choices have on the story?
* What artifacts are used- documents, letters, photographs, drawings? What effect do those artifacts have on the story?
* Does the text use other kinds of structure or genre, such as poems, plays, myths, or journalism? What does the use of other genres do to the memoir?

**Purpose**

* What does this author come to know about him- or herself and about the world? What about school, religion or spirituality, relationships with others, dreams, life experience?
* What can the person reading this story learn? Can this memoir change the world?