

The **biographical approach** means analyzing literature in terms of **the author's life**.

Author's Background	What it is	Examples
Heritage	A way of acting that is inherited from the past (about the past)	Language you speak, Clothes you wear, Foods you eat
Traditions	Actions repeated on a regular basis (about behavior)	Ways you celebrate holidays, Churches you go to
Attitudes	Opinions or feelings one has (about others)	I trust certain people, I help people I care about
Beliefs	What one believes to be true (ideas about life)	Honesty is important, Helping others is good

1. "This whole valley breathes and lives," he said, sweeping his arm toward the distant mountains that guarded them. 2. "It gives us the grapes and then they welcome us." 3. He gently touched a wild tendril⁵ that reached into the row, as if it had been waiting to shake his hand. 4. He picked up a handful of earth and studied it. 5. "Did you know that when you lie down on the land, you can feel it breathe? 6. That you can feel its heart beating?" 82 words

From Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

1. Is the passage about heritage, tradition, attitude, or beliefs?

2. Interpret what the author's life is like.

Vocabulary

⁵ thin, stem-like part of a climbing plant

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1. After all these years I'm still careful how I spend money, very careful, because there's a fear somewhere deep down inside myself – I don't let it rise to the surface, but I know where it is resting – that one day I'll wake up and everything will all be gone! 2. I'll be back to the poverty⁶ level, where just surviving from morning to night is a real challenge. 3. We live in the most litigious⁷ society in the world, and we all know that all kinds of unexpected things can happen.

From *The Measure of a Man* by Sidney Poitier

90 words

1. Is the passage about heritage, tradition, attitude, or beliefs?

2. Interpret what the author's life is like.

Vocabulary

⁶ the condition of being very poor

⁷ too often taking arguments to a court of law for a decision

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1. The rain comes and you hear the sound of it on the thatched¹ roof and you sit waiting for it to stop because you want to go outside and play marbles – that is, play with the dried seeds from the pods of certain trees that were the marbles of my day. 2. And if it's a Sunday, you want your mother to be able to get to the kitchen and cook the rice, because you know that you always have rice on Sunday.

81 words

1. Is the passage about heritage, tradition, attitude, or beliefs?

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Vocabulary

¹ roof made with straw or weeds