Questions to Consider: Selecting Biography

In General

1. *What is the overall order/format/layout of the book? Is this the most appropriate or engaging format? For example, is the text written chronologically or in some other order? Has the author done anything unique with the book's format?*

2. *Does the book begin in an engaging manner that draws the reader in? What does the author do in the beginning of the book to attract the reader?*

3. *Is the book a full biography or a memoir from the person's life?*

Introduction / Initial Engagement

1. *Does the book begin in an engaging manner that draws the reader in?*

2. *What does the author do in the beginning of the book to attract the reader?*

The Writing

1. *Is the text conversational or more encyclopedic in wording?*

2. *Does the author use language that is appropriate and interesting?*

3. *Consider the author's voice or tone toward his/her subject.*

Content: The Life of the Individual

1. *Does the author give a balanced and humanistic portrayal of the individual's life?*

2. *Does the author take dramatic license? For example, does the author include dialogue, interpretation of events, or make assumptions about this person's life?*

3. *How important is the chronicling of this person's life for the intended audience of this book? Has this book contributed something about the person's life that has not already been well written or presented? In other words, why was this book written?   Does this book add important information?*

The Book's Audience Appeal

1. *Is this a book you would want to own, personally? Why or why not?*

2. *Is this book about a person that young people would want to read about? Why?*

Text Features and Illustrations

1. *Is the book illustrated? If so, do the illustrations richly enhance the book?*

2. *What format are the illustrations?*

3. *Does the book include primary sources such as photographs and letters, if possible? Quality?*

4. *What additional text features are included? How valuable are each? Are they appropriate to include? Should there be others?*