

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

A Farewell to Arms

by Ernest Hemingway

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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.

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

4. In this short chapter, Hemingway introduces us to the story. If you read these two pages carefully, you will find many clues as to when and where the book is set. Imagine that you are a private investigator whose area of expertise is fiction books. Carefully go through this chapter and note any clues Hemingway gives you about where, when, and under which circumstances this book takes place. Create a chart of these clues, and then write a short paragraph that explains the setting of this book. You may want to structure your chart like this

Clue

“We live in a house in a village”

House looked out “across the river and plains to the mountains.”

Meaning

Book does not take place in an urban setting

Natural beauty/rural or country setting

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...

CHAPTER III

7. When the narrator arrives back in the village, he returns to find that all of his belongings, despite his absence, are exactly where he left them in his room. He goes into great detail, explaining every item he owns and where those items are located in his room.

Write a descriptive paragraph, telling readers what kind of things you have in your own room. Like the narrator, be sure to explain what each item looks like and where it is located in the room.

8. The narrator says he spent his time off drinking and carousing and not caring about his actions. He says that, essentially, what is happening to him is “all and all and all.” He certainly seems to live for the moment, not worrying about what will happen to him in the future.

Which do you think is wiser, always planning for tomorrow, or simply living for today? Do you think that it is better to always plan ahead, being constantly aware of the consequences of your actions, or would you rather live your life and let the chips fall where they may?

9. The priest is disappointed that Henry did not go to Abruzzi. The priest had written to his family there, telling them to prepare for his friend’s arrival. Though the priest was disappointed, he and Henry still remain friends.

All people have had a time when a friend has let them down. Write a two-paragraph article for *Friendship* magazine, describing a time when a friend disappointed you. In your article, explain what happened, how it made you feel, and how the problem was resolved. Did you continue to be friends with the person who let you down?

CHAPTER IV

10. In speaking of her fiancé's death, Miss Barkley says that she would have given her fiancé anything if she had only known that he would soon die. Everyone has experienced regret the same as Miss Barkley does. It may be in things you wanted to say to someone, but couldn't or something you wanted to do, but wouldn't.

Make a list of 10 words that relate to the loss of a loved one. Then, write a poem about loss using at least four of those words. Here are a couple of words to get you started

- Loss
- Longing
- Sadness

11. Working on the front, Miss Barkley is well aware of the dangers of war. Even so, she holds onto the romantic notion that if her fiancé is injured, he will show up in her hospital. Then, she could personally nurse him back to health. Of course, this is not to be.

What would happen if Miss Barkley's fiancé was only injured and he did come to her hospital to recuperate? In the style of a romance novelist, write a scene for *A Farewell to Arms* in which Miss Barkley's fiancé is not killed, but injured, and is brought to her hospital.