

# Narrative Essay

**Narration** is a piece of writing that tells a story of an event or experience. It's usually easy and fun to write. When you write a narrative paragraph or essay, you tell a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

The events you include and the way you describe them create a story that is based on your point of view.

Have you read a good story lately? What did you like about it?

Any time you go to a movie or read a fiction book, you are looking at a narrative.

As a witness to an accident, a crime, or some other incident, you might report what took place.

Whenever readers need to understand **what happened**, narrative reporting is essential.

# Guidelines for a Narrative Essay

1. Set the scene immediately.

Place readers right at the center of the action. If you open with some sort of background explanation, keep it short and sweet.

In a narrative essay, the **Thesis** introduces the action that begins in the first paragraph.

Now, as I watched the bus driver set my luggage on the airport sidewalk, I realized that my frustration had only just begun.

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5. Order details in a clear sequence.

Chronological ordering often works best in a narrative because it enables readers to follow events as they occurred.

6. Control your tenses and transitions.

Indicate a clear time frame for each event: present, past, past perfect, or even future. If you move from one time frame to another, be sure to keep the tense consistent within each frame.

**Transitions** will help signal the end of action in one paragraph, and provide a link to the action of the next paragraph. They give your story unity and allow the reader to follow the action easily.

Common time transitions:

■ Before

■ After

■ During

■ First

■ Next

■ Second

■ Then

■ Finally

■ while

■ Later

■ At last

■ Last

■ Eventually

■ Meanwhile

■ Since

■ Now

■ Soon

■ when

You finish describing the action in the essay in **the concluding paragraph**. The final sentence can have two functions:

1. It can deliver the moral of the story, or tell the reader what the characters or you learned from the experience.

2. It can make a prediction or a revelation about future actions that will happen as a result of the events in the story.



## Moral:

The little boy had finally learned that telling the truth was the most important thing to do.

## Prediction:

I can only hope that one day I will be able to do the same for another traveler who is suffering through a terrible journey.

Every Christmas Eve, my wife and I return to that magical spot and remember the selfless act that saved our lives.

When you think of a topic for your narrative essay, try to remember something exciting, difficult, wonderful, or frightening that has happened to you. Can this event be developed into an interesting narrative essay?

# Ask yourself questions:

- When was an important time in my life?
- What has happened in my experience that I would enjoy writing about?
- Is there an event in my life that other people would enjoy hearing about?
- How did I feel about a particular experience?
- Who was involved?
- Why do I remember this event so strongly?
- What effect did it have on me?
- Did anything change because of this experience?
- What interesting experiences do I know of that happened to other people?

If you are answering some of these questions about a specific experience that you or someone else had, then you may have a topic for a narrative essay.

**Write a narration paragraph or essay on one of the following topics.**

1. Explain the most important or interesting event that has happened to you in college.

2. Tell about a recent experience or incident you witnessed that left a strong impression on you.

3. Write about an event when you were proud of someone in your family.

**or**

Write about an event when you were proud or ashamed of your behavior.

4. Think of a time when you had to do something against your wishes.

Or

Think of a memorable experience you have had – it could be frightening, or amusing.

5. Talk about an interesting, incredible story you heard on the news recently.

After you have a suitable topic, brainstorm some ideas about your topic.

Organize your ideas. Remember that it's not necessary to tell every detail of the story. Include only the most important actions or events that move the story forward.

# Introduction:

What is the basic idea of the story?

Where is the story taking place?

When is the story taking place?

Who is in the story?

a) lead-in

b) connecting information

c) Thesis statement



## Body:

What feeling or atmosphere do you want to create in the story? What will happen in the plot?

A) Paragraph 2 – Topic sentence

1.

2.

3. transition sentence

## Conclusion:

What will happen last in the story?

How will you finish the plot?

Will your narrative essay have a moral or make a prediction or a revelation?

A) close of the action

B) final sentence (moral, prediction or revelation)