

Personal Narrative

A personal narrative combines a report with a story. It will have an introduction and a conclusion. The body of the paper will be a story about an event or experience in your life or someone else's life.

What is it?

1. Write a personal narrative describing and explaining something that you have done to help someone else.
2. Write a personal narrative about something funny that happened to you. Describe what happened and explain how you felt and acted.

What do I need to do? (sample prompts)

What will it look like?

Title

Introduction

B

Quick Sketch

M

Quick Notes

E

Conclusion

Personal Narrative Example

An Embarrassing Moment

Last week, my friend and I did the most embarrassing thing in art class.

For a month, our class practiced using watercolor paints. On Thursday, Ms. Levine told us all to finish our final project, paintings of flowers in fields of grass. My friend Jamal and I finished first, so we offered to help clean brushes.

When Ms. Levine sent us to get the buckets for the brushes, we filled them half full of water just like we were told. Jamal reminded me to walk slowly as I carried my bucket to the brush table. I lifted the handle and held the bucket with both hands.

Just as I started walking, I saw a spider crawl up the side of the bucket. I don't like spiders at all. I wanted to scream but instead I pretended like nothing was wrong. I just walked faster and tried to get to the brush table.

I thought I was going to make it, but the spider jumped. I jumped too, and the water in my bucket went straight up.

Before I could do anything, Jamal bumped into me with his bucket of water. I did not know it, but he was following right behind me. His bucket of water spilled all over me and our other friends who were sitting at Table 4.

Our friends all laughed, but Jamal and I just looked at Ms. Levine. We also looked at the projects on Table 4. The watercolor flowers had turned into large ponds of different colors.

Ms. Levine did not get upset. She helped us with the mess. She told everyone at Table 4 that they now had some very special paintings.

Even though it all turned out right, I was so embarrassed about what happened and how we destroyed our friends' projects. But Ms. Levine showed us that it's no good to be upset. She actually liked the "new" paintings.

Title

Introduction

Beginning of the story

Middle

End of the story

Conclusion (with Message)

Personal Narrative Example

Name: _____ Date: _____

Personal Narrative Practice Guide I

Title

Mashed Potato Pizza

Introduction

My grandpa always tells me that people who laugh at their own mistakes will get everyone else to laugh along with them. Yesterday, I learned that he is right.

Beginning of the Story

"Stay in line," Mrs. Martin said. I knew right away that my friend Naomi wouldn't be able to cut. I looked at Naomi and frowned. Soon, the line began to move faster, and I followed along hoping that there would still be pizza.

Middle Events

When I reached the counter, I looked at the choices. I could only see chicken and mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and fish. I could hear the rumbling of my very disappointed stomach. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw one last piece of pepperoni pizza. I got so excited.

"Pepperoni pizza," I said politely. Mrs. Martin handed me the pizza. I took the paper plate so quickly that the pizza slid off the plate. I tried to save it, but the pizza landed in the pan of hot, buttery mashed potatoes.

I could feel my face turning redder and redder. All I could hear was laughter from the kids in line.

As I looked at the upside-down pizza, I heard Mrs. Martin's voice. "Maria, would you like a side of mashed potatoes with your pizza?"

End of the Story

I looked up and saw Naomi. She was laughing too. With a nervous smile, I said, "Of course."

Mrs. Martin smiled and scooped the mashed potato pizza on my plate. I looked around at my friends, and we all laughed again.

I never really believed my grandpa until I saw my friends laughing with me. The laughing made me feel good instead of just clumsy.

Conclusion

You need a title.

You need to let the readers know what you plan to prove or explain.

You need to tell a story as proof.

You need to remind the readers about your topic and message.

Beginning

Middle

End

Tips for Story/Narrative Writing Assessments

Tips for Story/Narrative Writing Assessments *(continued)*

Directions: Steps 1, 2, and 3 should take only six to seven minutes. Work quickly as you plan and use the rest of the time to write your story.

Step 1 Read the prompt twice; circle or underline the key phrase in the prompt.

Example:

Pretend that you have been given a set of keys to a huge box. Write a story about what happens after you open the mysterious box.

Step 2 Quickly, give the story a title based on words from the prompt—a title that will let readers know that you are on topic.

Step 3 On scrap paper or on the planning pages in your test booklet, develop a quick sketch with quick notes of your ideas for a story.

Step 4 Use your sketches and notes to write the story. As you write the story, remember:

- The “Where” and “When” strategies for starting a story are the easiest, and they will help you create the setting. Keep the prompt in mind as you write the first sentence(s) of the story.
- Story transitions will help you with organization. They will also help the reader see the logic and sequencing of events in your story.
- Limit dialogue to one or two places—places that let the dialogue serve a purpose and enhance your story.
- Tell your story with feeling and with a purpose.

Step 5

Complete the first draft* and/or final copy. Make sure that you have an ending that makes the story feel complete. Remember the following phrases for writing an ending:

- Note a feeling.
- Remember a character.
- Get the point of the story.
- Think about the story.

Step 6

If your assessment allows time for revision, remember the following tips for revising your draft:

- Check for sentence variety.
- Replace “to be” verbs with action verbs.
- Improve paragraphing.
- Add details that tell more about the action, the problem, the character(s), and the ending.

*Some assessments ask for only a first draft, while others provide time for revision and a final, more polished version of the story.

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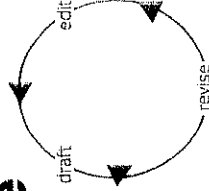
Writing the Ending to a Story/Narrative

Examples from Published Stories

<p>Note a Feeling</p>	<p>And they and their mother danced joyfully around the spring all day long. from "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids"</p>
<p>Remember a Character</p>	<p>The green eyes of the children still haunt the villagers, and the mystery of their origins was never solved. from "The Green Children"</p>
<p>Think About the Story</p>	<p>In sacrificing our humble neighbor, we brought about the ruin of all. from "The Trees and the AX"</p>
<p>Get the Point</p>	<p>From that time forth, the tortoise would carry its house on its back. Never would the tortoise be able to leave home, even if it wanted to. from "How the Tortoise Got Its Shell"</p>

cted from 365 Bedtime Stories

Revising Your Story/Narrative



<p>1. Remember</p>	<p>your goal is to SHOW, not just TELL, the story.</p>
<p>2. Circle</p>	<p>the "to be" verbs and replace them with action verbs. Change <i>are running to raced</i>, change <i>was thinking to pondered</i>.</p>
<p>3. Use</p>	<p>sensory detail—words and phrases that help readers see, hear, smell, or feel what is happening in the story. Circle examples of sensory detail in your first draft. Add or improve the sensory detail.</p>
<p>4. Help</p>	<p>your reader picture the setting of the story. Try describing the day, the weather, small animals or objects, buildings, nature, the sky, or some unusual characteristic of the place where your characters live.</p>
<p>5. Add</p>	<p>information or description that will help your readers remember your characters. Bring characters to life by explaining their thoughts and actions.</p>
<p>6. Check</p>	<p>for sentence variety. Highlight the first word or phrase in each sentence. If they look or sound alike, rewrite them, rearranging the sentence structure or making different word choices. Play with the words.</p>
<p>7. Look</p>	<p>at your paragraphs. Stories need short and long paragraphs. Read the story aloud. Ask yourself if more short paragraphs are needed or a few very short paragraphs could be combined into a longer piece.</p>
<p>8. Find</p>	<p>the story transitions that you have used in the first draft. Mark these words. Take time to improve the transitions so that the story flows.</p>
<p>9. Reread</p>	<p>the ending. Is it smooth? Will your reader remember the ending? How does it connect with the beginning of the story and with the conflict/climax of the story?</p>
<p>10. Improve</p>	<p>your story! You may need to draft, revise, and edit several times.</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Writing the Ending to a Story/Narrative

Note a Feeling	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Remember a Character	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Think About the Story	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Get the Point	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Personal Narratives – Practice

Practice One

[I] This summer, I learned that following the rules can keep me safe.

[Story]

[C] I'm glad that I learned this lesson and that no one was hurt. Rules aren't always fun to follow, but they are usually made for a good reason.

Practice Two

[I] After what happened in _____ class, I was so embarrassed that I didn't think I could ever go back to school. But _____ convinced me I could.

[Story]

[C] I hated feeling silly. It was hard _____, but now I know that I am not the only one who ever _____.

Practice Three

[I] Being new at school is not always fun. Last week when I saw the new girl in our class sitting alone, I really wanted to sit with her. But I chickened out and sat with my friends. I wish now that I had been braver.

[Story]

[C] Everything really did turn out okay. That's good. If I get another chance to make someone feel welcome, I know that I will.

Practice Four

[I] I always heard that people who laugh at their own mistakes will get everyone else to laugh along with them. Yesterday, I learned that saying is right.

[Story]

[C] I never really believed the saying "Laugh and the world laughs with you" until I saw my friends laughing with me. The laughing made me feel good instead of just clumsy.

(continued)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Personal Narrative Practice Guide III

(Title) _____

(Introduction)

(The Story)

Beginning

Middle

(continued)

Personal Narrative Practice Guide III *(continued)*

(The Story Continued)

Middle

End

(Conclusion and Message)
