

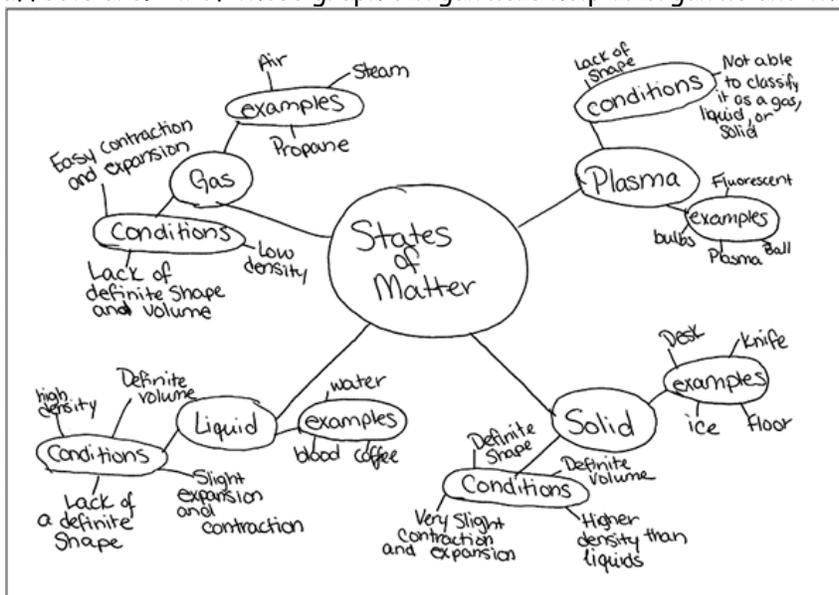
Personal Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is writing that tells a story or part of a story. It can be in first or third-person point of view. Narratives are stories that give the writers a chance to write about almost anything in a personal way. The writers must also appeal to their audience when writing to make sure it is correct language for that audience. Details are key if the writers want to be able to let the reader enjoy and imagine being in the story.

A personal narrative can be written about the writers (a personal experience the writer had or an event the writer took part in). Everybody has at least one experience that they can't forget, which is worthy of sharing. A personal narrative is a way that people can tell readers about certain experiences. The writers can also make-up a story if they cannot think of a good story to write about. The reader, if the writers include enough description, will think it is a true story. Writers must be very descriptive otherwise the reader might also be lost in the story.

How to Start

The first step in writing a personal narrative is to brainstorm. Graphic organizers can be used to arrange your ideas. Examples of graphic organizers are chain of events, clustering, a compare/contrast chart, a cycle, fish bone mapping, and many more. Chain of events shows a series of events. Clustering shows many ideas connected to one central word. A compare and contrast chart displays how two ideas are the same and all of their differences. When using a cycle, a writer shows how a series of events happens again and again. A fishbone map shows details and what their affects are. All of these graphic organizers help to organize and thoroughly think through thoughts.



The next step in writing a personal narrative essay is a rough draft. A rough draft is defined as the first version of a piece of writing. A rough draft should be used to write down all ideas without worrying about errors. The body paragraphs should include plot, conflict, theme, and chronological order, besides flashbacks. All of the errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling can be changed when the essay is edited. When writing a personal narrative, the introduction should have a startling statement, a flashback, or dialogue. Introductions must be able to grab the reader's attention to make them want to read the story. The introduction should set the exposition, telling the setting and what the essay is going to be about. The body paragraphs should generally contain a topic sentence. Other sentences should explain the topic sentence with more details. There should be transitions from paragraph to paragraph so that the reader knows the difference between paragraphs. The conclusion of a personal narrative should wrap up the story, answering any questions that the reader would have been wondering about. It should also contain the lesson or morale that the writer learned while experiencing that event.

Essay Structure

Introductions

The introduction can be tricky to write. It needs to give the main characters, the setting, the main conflict, and characterization. The main character in a personal narrative is the writer. Setting is the time or place where the events happen. Main conflict is the excitement in the story. No conflict and the story is boring. Characterization helps the readers get to know the characters.

Writers often want to have an introduction that is good enough to be in a novel, but still want to keep it in their own "voice". Keeping this balance can be difficult, but there are ways to do it.

One step to take would be to think of a favorite author or book, and the style that he writes. While copying this isn't a good idea, it can give a decent idea of what the introduction could sound like. Another tactic is the "startling statement" that grabs the reader's attention.

Many writers want to do this, but find it hard to write a truly startling beginning. When trying to write this attention grabber, think of movie trailers. The trailers whole point is to make the story look interesting or startle future movie goers so they want to see what happens next. This could help with introductions. Does the trailer show exciting fight scenes or scary monsters chasing people? This style can be used for startling flashbacks. The startling statement should grab the reader's attention. The other attention grabber could be dialog. Characters in movies might yell a name, and often see conversations between characters. Considering the way the director has people talk can help in essays (for example, the coach might sarcastically tell a non-athletic that he's great at sports). Either of these can be helpful in writing the introduction, but it still needs the writer's personal "voice". A way to see if it does is to read it out loud. If there are words that are stumbled over, or words that are switched out or re-arranged, consider re-writing those parts.

If none of this helps, try writing the introduction last, or write a mediocre introduction and then go back and re-write after writing the body paragraph. Writing the body could give one a better

understanding of their "voice", or the way words sound on a page.

Body

The body is the actual story; it is the part with the rising action, climax, and falling action. It tells the reader the events in the story, how it happened, and the feelings of the characters. Often times, writers find the body the easiest part to write. This is probably because many writers know what happens in the story, because it happened to *them*. The problem arises in writing an effective body that moves the story along, and flows into the next event. When writing the rough draft, remember to just write what ever comes to mind. After writing that out, it would be easier to revise because the thoughts are already on the page and the general order of events is present. The body can be checked for how well it flows by reading aloud. A writer can also check if it has their personal voice by asking the question "If I told my friends this story, would I say it something like this?" If the answer is no, consider re-writing.

Conclusion

The conclusion ties up all the loose ends in the story, so it should tie in with the introduction. Another important is considering the theme, which is the lesson learned from the story. Great examples of themes are in fables (Ex: In the Tortoise and the Hare, the theme is that slow and steady wins the race). It's necessary to remember that themes should relate to the story (so if the story is about how the writer got cocky over a game and lost, the fable should not be "Don't talk to strangers"). Conclusions should include thoughts, feelings, reactions, and how it will affect future experiences. When writing the conclusion, a writer should be clear about how important this lesson was, and include why this specific lesson was learned. The stories in this class are different from reading, where there could be an implied theme (theme isn't directly stated) or stated theme (theme directly said, like a fable). Since the reasons and feelings behind the lesson should be clear, play it safe and clearly state the theme and feelings. Like the introduction and body, it should flow smoothly and be easy to read aloud. Also remember that this is the last part the reader will read, so leave a lasting impression.

Literary Parts of a Narrative

- Action: when something is being done in a story
- Characters: the people who are in a story
- Climax: the most intense part of a story
- Conflict: the argument or fight in a story
- Dialog: the lines spoken by the characters
- Exposition: introduces the characters and setting
- Plot: the order of events that occur in a story
- Point-of-View: the angle in which the story is being told
 - 1st Person-telling the story in the writers' point of view (I, me, we)
 - 3rd Person-telling the story in the view of someone else (he, she, they)

- Resolution: the outcome of the conflict
- Setting: the time and place in which the story takes place
- Title: the name of the writers' story
- Theme: central idea or life lesson
- Tone: the attitude in which the speaker talks