

WRITING 14

NARRATIVE WRITING

TELL A STORY. ENGAGE YOUR READER. LEAVE AN IMPACT.



WHAT IS NARRATIVE WRITING?

Narrative writing tells a story that entertains, informs or inspires the reader. It includes real or imagined events, characters and settings. Good stories have a clear structure, vivid description, dialogue and an engaging plot.

PURPOSE

- To entertain your reader
- To share an experience
- To create an imaginary world
- To develop empathy
- To leave a lasting impression

KEY FEATURES



ENGAGING PLOT

A clear sequence of events with a problem, build-up and resolution.



WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS

Characters have personality, feelings, motivations and change.



VIVID SETTING

The time and place are described so the reader can imagine the story.



SHOW, DON'T TELL

Use actions, dialogue and description to show what is happening.



SENSORY LANGUAGE

Use the five senses to create mood and bring the story to life.



THEME / MESSAGE

Stories often have a deeper meaning or lesson.

EXAMPLE EXTRACT (ANNOTATED)

THE LOST JOURNAL

Rain hammered against the window as I pushed open the creaky door of the abandoned lighthouse. The **wind** howled like a warning, but **curiosity** pulled me forward.

Inside, dust danced in the beam of my torch. The walls were covered in peeling paint and strange, old drawings of ships disappearing into dark waves.

Then I saw it—an old leather-bound journal lying on a rotten wooden table. My hands trembled as I opened it.

"July 17th. The fog came at midnight. It was not fog..." the last entry read.

Suddenly, the light flickered. A shape moved outside the window. My heart pounded. I grabbed the journal and ran.

I never went back to that lighthouse, but sometimes, late at night, I still hear the wind...and I wonder what the sailor saw.

1 ORIENTATION

Introduces the setting, time and main character.

2 COMPLICATION

Something happens that creates a problem or tension.

3 BUILD-UP

Tension increases and the problem develops.

4 CLIMAX

The most exciting or intense part of the story.

5 RESOLUTION

The problem is resolved or the story ends.

6 REFLECTION / CLOSING

Leaves the reader with a thought or feeling.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE



ORIENTATION

Introduce characters, setting and time.



COMPLICATION

Introduce the main problem or conflict.



BUILD-UP

Events lead to greater tension and suspense.



CLIMAX

The turning point or most exciting moment.



RESOLUTION

The problem is solved or the situation changes.



REFLECTION / CLOSING

End with a feeling, lesson or thought.

LANGUAGE FEATURES



Descriptive adjectives

Use vivid words to paint mental pictures.



Adverbs and verbs

Show how characters act and how events happen.



Dialogue

Use speech to move the story on and reveal character.



Figurative language

Similes, metaphors and personification add impact.



Varied sentence lengths

Mix short, long, simple and complex sentences.



Emotive language

Words that create feeling and connect with readers.

USEFUL NARRATIVE STARTERS

OPENING / SETTING

- It was a dark and stormy night when ...
- In the distance, I could hear ...
- The sun had barely risen when ...

INTRODUCING A CHARACTER

- He was no ordinary boy ...
- She had a habit of ...
- Nobody knew that ...

ACTIONS & EVENTS

- Suddenly, without warning ...
- My heart raced as ...
- All of a sudden ...

DIALOGUE

- "Who are you?" he whispered.
- "We have to go now!" she shouted.
- "I can't believe it," I said.

SHOWING FEELINGS

- I felt a chill run down my spine ...
- Excitement bubbled inside me ...
- Fear gripped me as ...

ENDING / REFLECTION

- I will never forget that day ...
- As I walked away, I realised ...
- Sometimes, I still wonder ...

NARRATIVE WRITING CHECKLIST

- ✓ I have a clear and interesting title.
- ✓ I have set the scene and introduced my characters.
- ✓ I have a clear complication or problem.
- ✓ I have built suspense and developed the story.
- ✓ I have used dialogue to move the story or reveal character.
- ✓ I have used vivid description and sensory details.
- ✓ I have used a range of sentence structures.
- ✓ I have checked my spelling and punctuation.
- ✓ I have ended my story in a satisfying way.

STRONG vs WEAK NARRATIVES

WEAK



- Tells the reader everything.
- Little or no description.
- Events are not in order.
- Weak or flat characters.
- No tension or excitement.
- Dialogue is unrealistic.
- Ends abruptly.

Example (Weak):

I went to the castle. It was old.
I saw a ghost. I was scared.
Then I left. It was a bad day.

STRONG



- Shows the reader, doesn't tell.
- Vivid description and detail.
- Events flow in a logical order.
- Characters feel real and change.
- Builds tension and keeps readers interested.
- Dialogue sounds natural.
- Ends with impact.

Example (Strong):

Shivers raced down my spine as the ancient doors groaned open. Candle-light flickered... and then I saw her.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Starting too late – get to the action quickly.
- ✗ Too much telling, not enough showing.
- ✗ Using the same word repeatedly.
- ✗ Incorrect or missing punctuation.
- ✗ Lack of paragraphing.
- ✗ Unrealistic dialogue.
- ✗ Weak or predictable endings.



TYPES OF NARRATIVE WRITING



Short Stories

Complete a story in a short space with focus on one event.



Adventure Stories

Exciting tales with danger, journeys and challenges.



Realistic Fiction

Stories that could happen in real life with relatable characters.



Fantasy Stories

Include magic, mythical creatures and imaginary worlds.



Personal Narratives

True stories from the writer's own experiences.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED



A mysterious letter arrives.



You find a hidden door.



You wake up in a strange place.



A time when you were brave.



A photo that holds a secret.



You discover a long-lost treasure.



A storm changes everything.



You meet someone unexpected.



A rules-bending day at school.

A choice that changes your future.

WRITER'S TOOLKIT



Plan your story

Map out key events.



Draft your ideas

Don't worry about being perfect.



Revise and improve

Add detail, strengthen sentences.



Get feedback

Listen to others and refine.



Edit and proofread

Check spelling, punctuation and clarity.



Publish with pride

Share your story!



GREAT STORIES STAY WITH US. WRITE YOURS.

