

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

## WHAT IS NARRATIVE WRITING?

Narrative writing tells a story. It can be real or imagined. It entertains, informs or inspires the reader through events, characters and experiences.

### ★ PURPOSE

- To entertain
- To engage the reader
- To share an experience
- To teach a lesson

## THE 6 KEY FEATURES

- 1 CHARACTERS**  
The people or animals in the story. They have traits, feelings and motivations.
- 2 SETTING**  
Where and when the story takes place. This creates atmosphere.
- 3 PROBLEM**  
The main issue or challenge the characters must face.
- 4 EVENTS**  
The series of things that happen in the story.
- 5 RESOLUTION**  
How the problem is solved or resolved.
- 6 THEME / MESSAGE**  
The underlying lesson or message the story conveys.

## EXAMPLE EXTRACT (ANNOTATED)



Lena pulled her hood tighter against the biting wind. The old cabin loomed ahead, hidden among the towering pines.

She had been warned never to come here, especially at night. But curiosity had dragged her farther than she intended.

As she pushed open the creaking door, a chill ran down her spine. **Something was not right.**

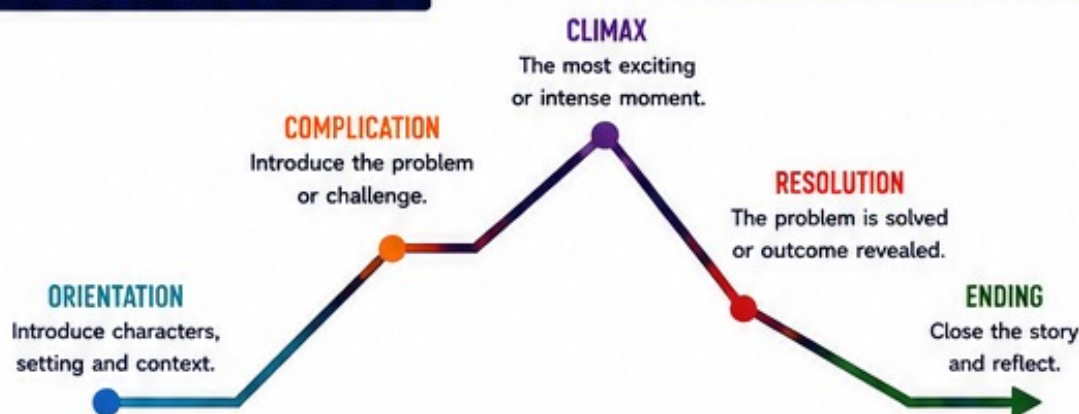
Footsteps echoed from the shadows. Lena's heart pounded as a figure stepped into the light. It was just an old man... or was it?

**In the end, Lena discovered the cabin held only memories—and a secret that would change her forever.**

**Sometimes, the bravest journeys lead us back to ourselves.**

- 1 CHARACTERS**  
Introduces the main character.
- 2 SETTING**  
Creates mood and atmosphere.
- 3 PROBLEM**  
Introduces the challenge or mystery.
- 4 EVENTS**  
Builds tension and moves the story forward.
- 5 RESOLUTION**  
Provides the solution or outcome.
- 6 THEME / MESSAGE**  
Gives the deeper meaning.

## STRUCTURE OF A NARRATIVE



## LANGUAGE FEATURES

- Past tense (e.g. walked, saw, discovered)
- Time connectives (e.g. first, then, suddenly, later, finally)
- Descriptive language (e.g. adjectives, adverbs, similes)
- Dialogue (e.g. "Help!" she cried.)
- Varied sentence types (short, long, simple, complex)
- Emotive language (e.g. terrified, relieved, desperate)

## USEFUL PHRASES

- SETTING**
- In the distance, ...
  - The sun disappeared behind ...
  - All around, ...
- TIME**
- Suddenly, ...
  - Without warning, ...
  - After what felt like hours, ...
- DIALOGUE**
- "I can't believe it!" she gasped.
  - "Who's there?" he shouted.
  - "We have to go now," she whispered.
- EMOTION**
- My heart raced when ...
  - I felt a wave of fear ...
  - Relief washed over me when ...

## STRONG vs WEAK NARRATIVES

### WEAK ❌

- Flat characters with no description.
- No clear problem.
- Events told in a list.
- Little or no description or dialogue.
- Predictable or rushed ending.

**Example (Weak):**  
I went to the house. It was old. I was scared. Then I left. The end.

### STRONG ✅

- Well-developed characters with feelings and motives.
- Clear conflict or challenge.
- Events build tension and drive the story.
- Vivid description and dialogue.
- Satisfying and meaningful ending.

**Example (Strong):**  
My hands trembled as the door creaked open. The darkness inside seemed to breathe. What I found changed everything.

## WRITER'S CHECKLIST

- ✅ I have a clear and interesting beginning.
- ✅ I have introduced my characters and setting.
- ✅ I have a clear problem or challenge.
- ✅ I have used a range of events to build tension.
- ✅ I have used description and dialogue.
- ✅ I have chosen strong, varied vocabulary.
- ✅ I have used time connectives.
- ✅ I have a satisfying resolution and ending.
- ✅ I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

## COMMON MISTAKES

- ❌ Starting the story too late.
- ❌ Using 'and then' too often.
- ❌ Not describing the setting or characters.
- ❌ Telling instead of showing.
- ❌ Ending suddenly or without resolving the problem.
- ❌ Using the same words repeatedly.



## CHALLENGE: IMPROVE IT!

Rewrite the weak sentence below to make it more engaging.

### WEAK:

I walked into the forest. It was dark and scary. I saw something. I ran away.

### IMPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## TOP TIP

### SHOW, DON'T TELL.

Instead of telling the reader how your character feels or what happens, use detail, action and description to **SHOW** it.

**TELL:** I was afraid.

**SHOW:** My legs shook and cold sweat trickled down my back as the door creaked open.



A GREAT STORY **STAYS** WITH THE **READER** LONG AFTER THE **FINAL WORD.**

