

## ESSAY OUTLINE

### I. Introduction

Thesis Statement

; couldn't see beyond self

**Body Paragraph 1**

### II. Hard time adjusting

Supporting Idea 1

#### A. Felt different

Detail

1. Felt lonely and left out

Detail

2. Felt different from the other students

Supporting Idea 2

#### B. Ashamed

Detail

1. Ashamed of problems with English

Detail

2. \_\_\_\_\_ felt embarrassing

**Body Paragraph 2**

### III. One day came home early

Supporting Idea 1

#### A. Heard grandparents talking about missing Mexico

Detail

1. Grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ ; she missed Mexico

Detail

2. Grandfather mentioned \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Idea 2

#### B. Felt ashamed

**Body Paragraph 3**

### IV. I gained

Supporting Idea 1

#### A. Understood complexity of their lives and their sacrifice

Detail

1. Grandparents never expressed anything but positive thoughts

Supporting Idea 2

#### B. Decided to work hard and made grandparents happy

Detail

1. Learned English and felt more comfortable

## V. Conclusion

Supporting  
Idea 1

### A. Grandparents' fortieth anniversary party

Detail

1. Traditional Mexican food and music

Detail

2. A way of repaying grandparents

Supporting  
Idea 2

### B. Lesson learned:

were grandparents' gifts

## B Narrative Essays

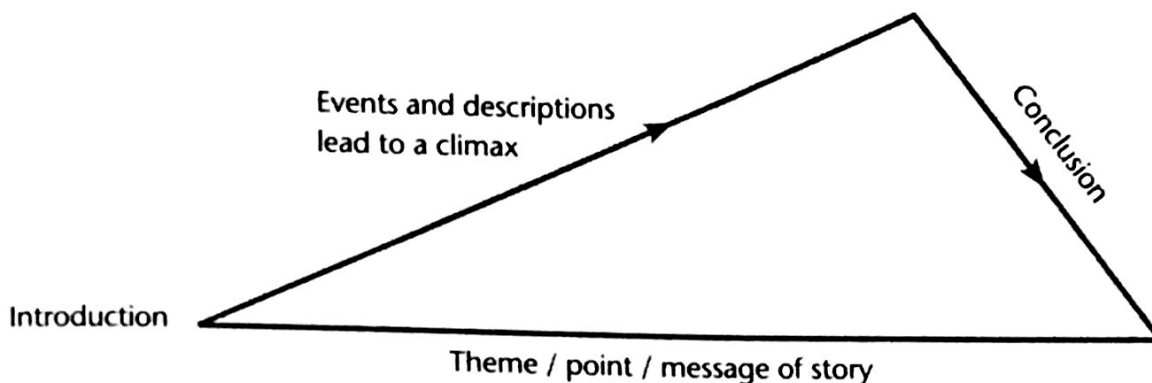
A narrative is a story that reveals an important point, message, or theme for the reader. Writers use stories for many purposes: to entertain, to teach, to explain, to evoke empathy and sympathy, and so on. Telling a story is an effective way to engage your readers by appealing to their emotions. The events in a narrative essay usually involve a conflict, such as a disagreement between two people or an obstacle to a goal. These events lead to a climax—the most interesting or significant part of the story.

### THE STRUCTURE

A good narrative includes the following:

- an **introductory paragraph** that prepares the reader for the story by describing the **setting** or the scene and the characters. It also usually presents the **thesis**, which is the point, message, or theme of the story.
- **believable characters** that engage the reader's interest.
- **interesting details** that put the reader in the story, such as sights, sounds, tastes, and other sensations. It may also include dialogue that makes the story come alive.
- a **conflict or problem** to solve.
- a **series of events** that lead to a **climax**. The events are described in a way that draws the reader in and makes the reader want to continue reading.
- a **concluding paragraph** that clarifies the point, message, or theme for the reader.

This is a diagram showing the parts of a narrative.



ACTIVITY

### 3.3 Notice

Work with a partner. Review the information above and complete the statements.

- 1 Another word for *narrative* is .
- 2 The purposes of a narrative include to evoke empathy or sympathy, to explain something, to entertain the reader, and to something.
- 3 The most interesting or significant part of a narrative is the .
- 4 A good narrative includes the following components:
  - an introductory paragraph
  - 
  - believable characters
  - interesting that put the reader in the story
  - a conflict or a problem
  - a series of events that leads to a
  - a concluding paragraph

### CHOOSING A GOOD IDEA FOR A STORY

The first step in writing a narrative is choosing a good story idea. The following questions can help writers choose an idea for a story:

- 1 Will my story communicate the purpose or lesson that I am being asked to write about?
- 2 Is there enough of a conflict so that the reader is drawn in and wants to see how the problem is resolved?
- 3 Will this story be interesting to my readers?
- 4 Are there interesting characters and scenes that I can use to develop my story? Can I create dialogue that helps my readers experience and respond to the situation?
- 5 Can the story be told in one essay? In other words, are there clear events that have a clear beginning and end over a specific period of time?



### 3.4 Notice

Read the following prompt and story ideas. Answer the writing prompt questions for each idea. Check (✓) the idea that you think would make the best story. Then explain your choice to a partner.

**WRITING PROMPT:** Think about the first day at a new school or a new job. What obstacles did you overcome? What advice do you have for others facing a new situation?

#### Story Ideas

- own choice*
- a my first job ever, at the supermarket deli counter, and how scared I was when I saw the dangerous meat-slicing machine they wanted me to use. In the end, I decided not to do such a dangerous job.
  - b the time I brought my insect collection to school on the first day of kindergarten and found out that my teacher was afraid of bugs
  - c the time I ran into another car on the way to my first day at work, found out that my new manager was the driver of the car I had just hit, and discovered that flexibility and humor can help a person handle even the most difficult situations
  - d finding out that my best friend cheated on an exam and trying to decide whether to tell the teacher. I never told and I never have forgotten it.
  - e when I learned that my uncle in Canada would pay for my college education if I agreed to move there for college and then stay afterward and work in his business. It was a decision that made me seriously think about my career.



### 3.5 Apply It to Your Writing



With a partner, ask and answer the writing prompt questions above to evaluate the story idea that you generated for your writing prompt in Section 1 on page 49.

#### THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

The introduction of a narrative essay sets the place and time of the story, or gives details about the main character. The paragraph may include a **thesis statement** that tells the point, message, or theme of the story. The thesis of a narrative essay may also be implied; that is, the writer does not state the thesis directly, but demonstrates it through the evidence in the story. However, a strong thesis statement can help you stay focused as you write and ensure that your essay answers the writing prompt. The student model has a strong thesis statement.

A good introduction includes a strong sense of setting, situation, and purpose for the story. A great introduction does it all with flair by including details and precise and interesting words. These details and words vividly set up the situation and the conflict or problem in a compelling way that illustrates the thesis. For example, if your thesis is "dreams don't always come true and sometimes it's best that they don't," then you need to create the experience of what the dream was, its importance to your characters, and hint at the struggle or frustration that your characters will inevitably deal with. This makes your readers want to continue reading.





### 3.6 Discuss the Paragraphs

Work with a partner. Which introductory paragraph is better, A or B? Why? Think of more information that you can add, such as details about the setting or the characters, that would improve the other paragraph.

A I had just graduated from college and it was my first day at my new job. It was my dream job – working as a web designer for my local school district. However, I had no idea that I was about to have a big surprise when I found out who my new boss was. My experience that day taught me that humor and a positive attitude go a long way toward smoothing out difficult situations.

B I'll never forget that day: It was a warm spring morning and the air was infused with a sense of hope and excitement. I felt this sense of hope throughout my body as I got into my car and set out on the long drive to my new life. After struggling to survive on unemployment for the past year, I had finally found a solution. The offer of a dream job convinced me to move halfway across the country and start a new life. However, one small mistake that day almost robbed me of all of my dreams. As unfortunate as the incident was, I learned an important lesson that day: Dreams don't always come true, and sometimes it's best that they don't.



### 3.7 Apply It to Your Writing



Think about the writing prompt you chose in Section 1. Write some details and incidents that you might use in your introduction. You can change these later.

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### 3.8 Thesis Statements

With a partner, read the writing prompt and the introductory paragraph. Then read the three possible thesis statements to complete the paragraph on page 62. Check (✓) the thesis statement that best answers the prompt and expresses the point of the story.

**WRITING PROMPT:** The American novelist Thomas Wolfe once said, "You can't go home again." This saying became a part of American culture and means that once you grow up and leave home, you will never feel the same again about it. Relate an experience that you or someone you know has had that either supports or contradicts this idea.

#### INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

As Thomas Wolfe once said, "You can't go home again." The American author was expressing the idea that once you grow up and go out into the world and experience what life has to offer, you will never feel the same again about the place you left. For example, if you move from a small town to a city, when you return home, your town will seem small and inadequate, and the people living there will seem dull and unsophisticated. You'll feel like a stranger in a strange land because you have grown while those who stayed behind never changed.

## Thesis Statements

- a My decision to stay home and take care of my disabled brother, rather than leave to attend college in another city, taught me the truth of this saying.
- b However, an experience that I had returning home after three years of college in a foreign country taught me the opposite of this saying: You *can* go home again.
- c However, after backpacking through Asia for three months, I learned that I can make my home anywhere in the world where people are kind, welcoming, and open-minded.

ACTIVITY

### 3.9 Apply It to Your Writing

YOUR TURN

Think about the writing prompt you chose in Section 1. Write a possible theme for your narrative. Can you express it as a thesis statement? If so, write a thesis statement for your narrative. Work with a partner and check that your theme and/or thesis statement answers your prompt and expresses the main point of your story.

## BODY PARAGRAPHS

The body paragraphs of a narrative essay include a sequence of well-chosen events; vivid descriptions of characters, feelings, and places; and revealing dialogue that move the action forward and end in a climax, a meaningful moment that changes the character.

Although I managed to keep my mouth shut, these questions bothered me until one day when I came home unexpectedly. My grandmother was looking at old pictures from Mexico. For the first and only time in my life, I saw her sobbing. My grandfather's arms were around her and he patted her hair. I stayed out of sight but overheard her telling my grandfather, "I miss them all so much - Diego, Isa, Hector, all the rest of our family. I miss the whole town; I miss Luz, Mercedes, and all my old friends, the house that you built and that we lived in so many years, my garden ..." My grandfather was trying to comfort her. "My love," he told her, "Always remember that we did this so that our grandchildren can have the security of a bright future." An overwhelming sense of shame washed over me. "How could I have been so selfish as to be ashamed of them at school and even at home?" I wondered. I had only

These events are and necessary to story.

Instead of reporting speech, the writer uses direct speech to make the story and the characters more real.

Notice the precise language the writer uses to describe the characters.

thought of how the move to the United States had affected me. In the case of my grandparents, who had spent such long lives in Mexico, it had been much harder.

Suddenly, I gained a new perspective on my situation. I began to understand the complexity of my grandparents' lives and the sacrifices they had made and were making for me and my sister and we never knew. Through all their difficulties, they always smiled, made us laugh, and gave us hope about the future. My sister and I had been given a gift from our grandparents. That was it. I decided right then and there to make the most of it. My worries over struggling to speak English like my peers were replaced with an ambition to work my hardest to repay my grandparents for what they had done. This hard work paid off more quickly than I had imagined possible in my learning English fluently and feeling more comfortable in my new homeland.

Notice the sentence the writer uses to signal the climax.

Read the two paragraphs from the Student Model.

When using **dialogue**, it is important to follow punctuation rules for direct quotations. These are the MLA (Modern Language Association) rules for punctuating dialogue:

- 1 Before a quotation, use a comma or a colon.  
*The young man said, "I want to be just like you."*
- 2 Question marks and exclamation points go inside the quotation marks if the person being quoted asked a question or exclaimed something. Otherwise, they go outside.  
*The interviewer asked all applicants, "What obstacles have you overcome?"*  
*What did Thomas Wolfe mean by "You can't go home again"?*
- 3 For quotes within quotes, use single quotation marks.  
*According to Williams, "When asked why they come here, most immigrants answer 'for economic opportunities.'"*
- 4 For quoted words or phrases with commas and periods, the comma or period goes inside the quotation mark.  
*The feeling of not belonging to any culture is sometimes referred to as "anomie."*