**Narration**

A narrative often reflects your personal experience, explaining what happened during some sort of experience. Stories are narrative, and narrative essays have a similar purpose of telling the events to a reader. Narrative essay topics include recounting an experience where you learned something significant, your first day at school, your first job interview, a frightening encounter, an experience that changed your life and two differing versions of the same event. Narration is not always a personal experience, though; a book report is narrative since it typically spells out the plot of the book or story.

**Description**

Description uses sensory detail (sights, sounds, tactile sensations, tastes and smells) to describe a scene, person or feeling to a reader. As you describe, you create a three-dimensional picture so your reader can experience the item, place, person or emotion along with the reading. Descriptive essay topics include your favorite place, your bedroom, your best friend, the most unusual object you own, an art exhibit, the best or worst teacher you ever had, your ideal job or dream home.

## Similarities

Both narrative and descriptive essays should follow essay format with an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and a concluding paragraph. At the end of the introduction, place a thesis, a sentence that explains the overall purpose of your paper. You should give a reason for your narration or description in that thesis, explaining why this event, person, place or thing is important enough for you to write about. The thesis might express that you are telling a story because you learned something significant or that you are describing a place that creates a sense of calm in your life. In both narration and description, include specific details in the body paragraphs to support the idea set forth in your thesis.

## Differences

Narration often employs first person point of view, using words like "I" and "me," while other modes including description do not. The biggest difference between the two is that a narrative essay includes action, but the descriptive essay does not.

Think about “Third World Driving…” or “When You Camp Out…” Neither had a “story.” Just description. Even the example where they’re in a car doesn’t *really* tell a story. They’re in the same place (the car) at the beginning and the end.