

Basic Format of a Narrative Essay

Paragraph #1-The Introduction

1. Begin with an attention grabber that captures your reader's interest.

Ex: Sometimes it takes something terrible to realize what is important in life.

2. Follow with 2-3 sentences that lead up to your thesis statement.

3. State your thesis statement–this should clearly state the experience or event that you will describe and its significance. Do not begin telling the details of your story yet.

Example: Although my sister and I have sometimes not seen eye-to-eye at times, it took her being horribly sick to make me realize how much she truly means to me.

Paragraph #2-4 Body Paragraphs-Your story.

1. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence. Begin this sentence with a TRANSITION that show the order that the events occurred (First, Later, In the end, Second, Third, etc.) and the details of your story.

Examples:

The day first began like any other day.

Later that day, my sister began to feel worse and my family and I began to worry.

After a day of much distress, my sister finally began to feel better.

2. This is where you tell your story. Just like any story you read, you need to make sure to have a clear beginning, middle, and an end. Make sure to describe people and places involved with vivid details.

General guidelines:

- A rule familiar to a lot of essay writers is to give one idea per paragraph.
- A story has to follow some logical pattern. Chronological is the easiest one.
- With every new paragraph underline the significance of experience and the universal truth the story brings to the audience.
- Use descriptive language. This is made possible by using figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification), sensory words (use your 5 senses to place your reader where you are) and vivid words (smiled brightly, explained softly).

Paragraph #5: The Conclusion

The Conclusion is just as important as the Introduction; It is the last impression your reader will get of your story.

1. Begin by re-stressing the importance of your thesis. Be careful not to use the same wording.

Example: Although the day my sister fell ill was a horrible day for my family, it made us all realize how important we are to each other.

2. Summarize the basic events of your story.

3. Reflect on the larger meaning or importance of the experience described. Basically, what was the point of your story? Explain the new understanding and why/how this experience or event has a permanent effect on you.

Example: This day may have been horrible, but sometimes it is through the horrible events in life that people begin to value the best in life.

The 5-Paragraph Narrative Essay Outline

Attention Grabber:

Thesis Statement

Topic Sentence

#1 _____

Describe:

A.

B.

C.

Examples of descriptive language (sense words, similes or metaphors, vivid words):

Topic

Sentence#2 _____

Describe:

A.

B.

C.

Examples of descriptive language (sense words, similes or metaphors, vivid words):

Topic Sentence #3 _____

Describe:

A.

B.

C.

Examples of descriptive language used:

First Sentence of

Conclusion: _____

Transitions used _____