
NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE | WHAT IS IT?

- A narrative is a retelling of events in the form of a story, told from the first or third person perspective, that relates to a larger purpose, point, or maxim.
- The larger purpose, point or maxim can be stated or implied
- Strong Narratives are edited down to include only the key points, conflicts, action, or dialogue that shape the event. If you include too much information you run the risk of diluting the overall purpose or idea you want to convey.



NARRATIVE | WHERE DO I BEGIN?

- Brainstorm ideas before writing your narrative.
 - free writing
 - mind mapping
 - note taking
 - dictating
 - discussing & remembering
 - Use your brainstormed ideas to guide and shape your draft



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

- Write ACTIVELY
 - What is your purpose in writing this story?
 - inform
 - persuade
 - entertain
 - advise
 - Who is your intended audience?
 - Is it your teacher? Are you writing with someone else in mind? Are you addressing a particular discourse community?
 - How do these audiences differ?
 - How might these differences influence / shape / determine your narrative tone?



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Understand the Assignment

- Choose a story you can tell - start to finish - in a 4-5 page paper.
- When in doubt, outline the story's main points on paper, then use these notes to tell your story to a friend or classmate.
 - If it takes you less than 2 minutes to tell the story you will either have to add more details or choose another topic. If it takes you more than 5 minutes to tell your story, you will either have to pare the details down or find another topic.
- Your story must be true - this is not a creative writing assignment!
- You must be a central figure in the story: it should tell the reader about something that happened to you or something that you made happen.



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Zero-in on a topic

- Choose a story you feel strongly about, whether that feeling is happiness, sadness, fear, regret, nostalgia, empathy, etc...
- If the story means something to you you will use descriptive language naturally as you retell it
- Descriptive language helps to draw the reader in, to establish a rapport with the reader, and to shape your narrative voice



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Gather information

- The best way to gather information is to tell and retell your story to a few different people.
- Tell your story to someone who was there (if possible).
 - Do they remind you of details you might have left out? Do they correct impressions or give you alternate impressions of how one or several parts of the story happened?
- Tell your story to someone who wasn't there.
 - What questions do they ask? Their questions will point out gaps in your storyline, non-sequential events, and missing information or details. Gauge how interested (or NOT so interested!) they seem to be in the story.



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Organize the information

- How many ways can you tell a story?
 - Is telling the story chronologically the only way to go?
- What feedback did you receive when you re-told your story?
 - Did your friend or classmate ask you to “go back” or clarify something you missed?
 - Pay attention to these cues - they will help you group details into appropriate sections and identify where to place paragraph breaks.
- Create an outline based on your brainstorming sheet, re-telling exercise (prep and post) notes, and any written feedback from your friends and/or peers



NARRATIVE | IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Develop a thesis statement

- Why do you need a thesis statement?
- Should your thesis be stated or implied?
- When should you develop your thesis statement?
- Write the first draft.
 - Create sentences to fully express the bullet points in your outline.
 - Before you know it your essay will be well on its way to being complete



