

# Writing Personal Narratives

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## What is a personal narrative?



*In a personal narrative, you re-create an incident that happened to you over a short period of time. This incident could be an uplifting event, a frightening encounter, a humorous occurrence, or some other type of memorable experience. Be sure to include enough specific details to make the incident come alive for your readers. Even if you can't recall everything, fill in the gaps with details that seem to fit.*

## Characteristics of Narration



- Tells a story
- Has a theme rather than a topic sentence
- Written in first person
- Tends to be factual
- Includes description
- Includes dialogue
- Relies on sensory details for impact
- Utilizes the techniques of storytelling
  - Plot
  - Setting and characters
  - Climax
  - Ending
- Follows a chronological organization

## Requirements



**Length:** 3-4 pages  
**Font:** Arial, Times New Roman, or Courier New  
**Font Size:** 12-14 point  
**Spacing:** Double  
**Alignment:** 1-inch margins  
**Cover Page:** Title, Name, Date, Class

## Due Date:

Final Draft- Friday  
March 6, 2009

**WARNING:**  
**DUE DATES**  
**ARE CLOSER**  
**THAN THEY**  
**APPEAR**

## Narrative Writing



## Purpose:

- to entertain and enthrall



## Structure

- An opening including setting and characters
- A problem or change
- A series of events.
- A complication.
- Resulting events.
- Resolution and ending.



## Language Features

- Written in 1st or 3rd person
- Past tense.
- Chronological but may contain flashbacks.
- Distinctive characters.



## Objectives

To effectively write a personal narrative with focus on:

- Purpose and audience
- Supportive and descriptive details
- Use of dialogue
- Sentence structure and variety
- Organization
- Correctness



## Momma, the Dentist, and Me

### ■ Maya Angelou

*Best-selling author and poet Maya Angelou was born in 1928. She is an educator, historian, actress, playwright, civil rights activist, producer, and director. She is best known as the author of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1970), the first book in a series that constitutes her recently completed autobiography, and for "On the Pulse of the Morning," a characteristically optimistic poem on the need for personal and national renewal that she read at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993. Starting with her beginnings in St. Louis in 1928, Angelou's autobiography presents a life of joyful triumph over hardships that test her courage and threaten her spirit. It includes the titles All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes (1986), Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now (1993), and Heart of a Woman (1997). The sixth and final book in the series, A Song Flung Up to Heaven, was published in 2002. Several volumes of her poetry were collected in Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou in 1994.*

*In the following excerpt from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Angelou narrates what happened, and what might have happened, when her grandmother, the "Momma" of the story, took her to the local dentist. As you read, consider how vital first-person narration is to the essay's success, particularly as you gauge the effect of the italicized paragraphs.*



**T**he angel of the candy counter had found me out at last, and was exacting excruciating penance for all the stolen Milky Ways,

Mounds, Mr. Goodbars and Hersheys with Almonds. I had two cavities that were rotten to the gums. The pain was beyond the bailiwick<sup>1</sup> of crushed aspirins or oil of cloves. Only one thing could help me, so I prayed earnestly that I'd be allowed to sit under the house and have the building collapse on my left jaw. Since there was no Negro dentist in Stamps, nor doctor either, for that matter, Momma had dealt with previous toothaches by pulling them out (a string tied to the tooth with the other end looped over her fist), pain killers and prayer. In this particular instance the medicine had proved ineffective; there wasn't enough enamel left to hook a string on, and the prayers were being ignored because the Balancing Angel was blocking their passage.

I lived a few days and nights in blinding pain, not so much toying with as seriously considering the idea of jumping in the well, and Momma decided I had to be taken to a dentist. The nearest Negro dentist was in Texarkana, twenty-five miles away, and I was certain that I'd be dead long before we reached half the distance. Momma said we'd go to Dr. Lincoln, right in Stamps, and he'd take care of me. She said he owed her a favor.

I knew there were a number of whitefolks in town that owed her favors. Bailey and I had seen the books which showed how she had lent money to Blacks and whites alike during the Depression, and most still owed her. But I couldn't aptly remember seeing Dr. Lincoln's name, nor had I ever heard of a Negro's going to him as a patient. However, Momma said we were going, and put water on the stove for our baths. I had never been to a doctor, so she told me that after the bath (which would make my mouth feel better) I had to put on freshly starched and ironed underclothes from inside out. The ache failed to respond to the bath, and I knew then that the pain was more serious than that which anyone had ever suffered.

Before we left the Store, she ordered me to brush my teeth and then wash my mouth with Listerine. The idea of even opening my clamped jaws increased the pain, but upon her explanation that when you go to a doctor you have to clean yourself all over, but most especially the part that's to be examined, I screwed up my courage and unlocked my teeth. The cool air in my mouth and the jarring of my molars dislodged what little remained of my reason. I had frozen to the pain, my family nearly had to tie me down to take the toothbrush away. It was

<sup>1</sup>bailiwick: a specific area of interest, skill, or authority.



"It's been paid, and raising your voice won't make me change my mind. My policy . . ." He let go of the door and stepped nearer Momma. The three of us were crowded on the small landing. "Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's."

He had never once looked at me. He turned his back and went through the door into the cool beyond. Momma backed up inside herself for a few minutes. I forgot everything except her face which was almost a new one to me. She leaned over and took the doorknob, and in her everyday soft voice she said, "Sister, go on downstairs. Wait for me. I'll be there directly."

Under the most common of circumstances I knew it did no good to argue with Momma. So I walked down the steep stairs, afraid to look back and afraid not to do so. I turned as the door slammed, and she was gone.

Momma walked in that room as if she owned it. She shoved that silly nurse aside with one hand and strode into the dentist's office. He was sitting in his chair, sharpening his mean instruments and putting extra sting into his medicines. Her eyes were blazing like live coals and her arms had doubled themselves in length. He looked up at her just before she caught him by the collar of his white jacket.

"Stand up when you see a lady, you contemptuous scoundrel." Her tongue had thinned and the words rolled off well enunciated. Enunciated and sharp like little claps of thunder.

The dentist had no choice but to stand at R.O.T.C.<sup>4</sup> attention. His head dropped after a minute and his voice was humble. "Yes, ma'am, Mrs. Henderson."

"You knave, do you think you acted like a gentleman, speaking to me like that in front of my granddaughter?" She didn't shake him, although she had the power. She simply held him upright.

"No, ma'am, Mrs. Henderson."

"No, ma'am, Mrs. Henderson, what?" Then she did give him the tiniest of shakes, but because of her strength the action set his head and arms to shaking loose on the ends of his body. He stuttered much worse than Uncle Willie. "No, ma'am, Mrs. Henderson, I'm sorry."

With just an edge of her disgust showing, Momma slung him back in his dentist's chair. "Sorry is as sorry does, and you're about the sorriest

dentist I ever laid my eyes on." (She could afford to slip into the vernacular<sup>5</sup> because she had such eloquent command of English.)

"I didn't ask you to apologize in front of Marguerite, because I don't want her to know my power, but I order you, now and here-with. Leave Stamps by sundown."

"Mrs. Henderson, I can't get my equipment . . ." He was shaking terribly now.

"Now, that brings me to my second order. You will never again practice dentistry. Never! When you get settled in your next place, you will be a vegetarian caring for dogs with the mange, cats with the cholera and cows with the epizootic. Is that clear?"

The saliva ran down his chin and his eyes filled with tears. "Yes, ma'am. Thank you for not killing me. Thank you, Mrs. Henderson."

Momma pulled herself back from being ten feet tall with eight-foot arms and said, "You're welcome for nothing, you varlet,<sup>6</sup> I wouldn't waste a killing on the likes of you."

On her way out she waved her handkerchief at the nurse and turned her into a crocus sack of chicken feed.

Momma looked tired when she came down the stairs, but who wouldn't be tired if they had gone through what she had. She came close to me and adjusted the towel under my jaw (I had forgotten the toothache; I only knew that she made her hands gentle in order not to awaken the pain). She took my hand. Her voice never changed. "Come on, Sister."

I reckoned we were going home where she would concoct a brew to eliminate the pain and maybe give me new teeth too. New teeth that would grow overnight out of my gums. She led me toward the drugstore, which was in the opposite direction from the Store. "I'm taking you to Dentist Baker in Texarkana."

I was glad after all that I had bathed and put on Mum<sup>7</sup> and Cashmere Bouquet talcum powder. It was a wonderful surprise. My toothache had quieted to solemn pain, Momma had obliterated the evil white man, and we were going on a trip to Texarkana, just the two of us.

On the Greyhound she took an inside seat in the back, and I sat beside her. I was so proud of being her granddaughter and sure that some of her magic must have come down to me. She asked if I was

<sup>4</sup>R.O.T.C.: Reserve Officers Training Corps of the U.S. military.

<sup>5</sup>vernacular: the everyday language spoken by people of a particular country or region.

<sup>6</sup>varlet: a rascal; lowlife.

<sup>7</sup>Mum: a brand of deodorant.

scared. I only shook my head and leaned over on her cool brown upper arm. There was no chance that a dentist, especially a Negro dentist, would dare hurt me then. Not with Momma there. The trip was uneventful, except that she put her arm around me, which was very unusual for Momma to do.

The dentist showed me the medicine and the needle before he 45  
deadened my gums, but if he hadn't I wouldn't have worried. Momma stood right behind him. Her arms were folded and she checked on everything he did. The teeth were extracted and she bought me an ice cream cone from the side window of a drug counter. The trip back to Stamps was quiet, except that I had to spit into a very small empty snuff can which she had gotten for me and it was difficult with the bus humping and jerking on our country roads.

At home, I was given a warm salt solution, and when I washed 46  
out my mouth I showed Bailey the empty holes, where the clotted blood sat like filling in a pie crust. He said I was quite brave, and that was my cue to reveal our confrontation with the peckerwood dentist and Momma's incredible powers.

I had to admit that I didn't hear the conversation, but what else 47  
could she have said than what I said she said? What else done? He agreed with my analysis in a lukewarm way, and I happily (after all, I'd been sick) flounced into the Store. Momma was preparing our evening meal and Uncle Willie leaned on the door sill. She gave her version.

"Dentist Lincoln got right uppity. Said he'd rather put his hand 48  
in a dog's mouth. And when I reminded him of the favor, he brushed it off like a piece of lint. Well, I sent Sister downstairs and went inside. I hadn't never been in his office before, but I found the door to where he takes out teeth, and him and the nurse was in there thick as thieves. I just stood there till he caught sight of me." Crash bang the pots on the stove. "He jumped just like he was sitting on a pin. He said, 'Annie, I done tole you, I ain't gonna mess around in no nig-gah's mouth.' I said, 'Somebody's got to do it then,' and he said, 'Take her to Texarkana to the colored dentist' and that's when I said, 'If you paid me my money I could afford to take her.' He said, 'It's all been paid.' I tole him everything but the interest been paid. He said, 'Twasn't no interest.' I said, 'Tis now. I'll take ten dollars as payment in full.' You know, Willie, it wasn't no right thing to do, 'cause I lent that money without thinking about it.

"He tole that little snippety nurse of his'n to give me ten dollars 49  
and make me sign a 'paid in full' receipt. She gave it to me and I

signed the papers. Even though by rights he was paid up before, I fig-  
ger, he gonna be that kind of nasty, he gonna have to pay for it."

Momma and her son laughed and laughed over the white man's 50  
evilness and her retributive<sup>8</sup> sin.

I preferred, much preferred, my version.

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## THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THIS SELECTION

1. What does Angelou mean when she states, "ON the other side of the bridge the ache seemed to lessen as if a white breeze blew off the white-folks and cushioned everything in their neighborhood-including my jaw" (paragraph 6). How long did Angelou's pain relief last? Why?  

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2. What is Angelou's purpose? (Purpose)  

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3. Compare and contrast the content and style of the interaction between Momma and the dentist that is given in italics with the one given at the end of the narrative (Comparison and Contrast).  

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4. Angelou tells her story chronologically and in the first person. (Point of View) What are the advantages of first person narration?  

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5. Identify three similes that Angelou uses in her narrative (Figure of Speech). Explain how each simile serves her purpose.  

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## How I Got Smart

### ■ Steve Brody

*Steve Brody is a retired high school English teacher who enjoys writing about the lighter side of teaching. He was born in Chicago in 1915 and received his bachelor's degree in English from Columbia University. In addition to his articles in educational publications, Brody has published many newspaper articles on travel and a humorous book about golf, *How to Break Ninety before You Reach It* (1979).*

*As you read his account of how love made him smart, an essay that first appeared in the New York Times in September 1986, notice his well-chosen and thoughtfully emphasized details.*



A common misconception among youngsters attending school is that their teachers were child prodigies.<sup>1</sup> Who else but a bookworm, prowling the libraries and disdaining the normal youngster's propensity for play rather than study, would grow up to be a teacher anyway?

I tried desperately to explain to my students that the image they had of me as an ardent devotee of books and homework during my adolescence was a bit out of focus. Au contraire! I hated compulsory education with a passion. I could never quite accept the notion of having to go to school while the fish were biting.

Consequently, my grades were somewhat bearish.<sup>2</sup> That's how my father, who dabbled in the stock market, described them. Presenting

my report card for my father to sign was like serving him a subpoena. At midterm and other sensitive periods, my father kept a low profile.

But in my sophomore year, something beautiful and exciting happened. Cupid aimed his arrow and struck me squarely in the heart. All at once, I enjoyed going to school, if only to gaze at the lovely face beneath the raven tresses in English II. My princess sat near the pencil sharpener, and that year I ground up enough pencils to fuel a campfire.

Alas, Debbie was far beyond my wildest dreams. We were separated not only by five rows of desks, but by about 50 I.Q. points. She was the top student in English II, the apple of Mrs. Larrivee's eye. I envisioned how eagerly Debbie's father awaited her report card.

Occasionally, Debbie would catch me staring at her, and she would flash a smile—an angelic smile that radiated enlightenment and quickened my heartbeat. It was a smile that signaled hope and made me temporarily forget the intellectual gulf that separated us.

I schemed desperately to bridge that gulf. And one day, as I was passing the supermarket, an idea came to me.

A sign in the window announced that the store was offering the first volume of a set of encyclopedias at the introductory price of 29 cents. The remaining volumes would cost \$2.49 each, but it was no time to be cynical.

I purchased Volume I—Aardvark to Asteroid—and began my venture into the world of knowledge. I would henceforth become a seeker of facts. I would become chief egghead in English II and sweep the princess off her feet with a surge of erudition.<sup>3</sup> I had it all planned.

My first opportunity came one day in the cafeteria line. I looked behind me and there she was.

"Hi," she said.

After a pause, I wet my lips and said, "Know where anchovies come from?"

She seemed surprised. "No, I don't."

I breathed a sigh of relief. "The anchovy lives in salt water and is rarely found in fresh water." I had to talk fast, so that I could get all the facts in before we reached the cash register. "Fishermen catch anchovies in the Mediterranean Sea and along the Atlantic coast near Spain and Portugal."

"How fascinating," said Debbie.

<sup>1</sup>prodigies: people with exceptional talents.

<sup>2</sup>bearish: trending downward; a term used to describe the stock market.

<sup>3</sup>erudition: extensive knowledge gained from books.

"The anchovy is closely related to the herring. It is thin and silvery in color. It has a long snout and a very large mouth."

"Incredible."

"Anchovies are good in salads, mixed with eggs, and are often used as appetizers before dinner, but they are salty and cannot be digested too rapidly."

Debbie shook her head in disbelief. It was obvious that I had made quite an impression.

A few days later, during a fire drill, I sidled<sup>4</sup> up to her and asked, "Ever been to the Aleutian Islands?"

"Never have," she replied.

"Might be a nice place to visit, but I certainly wouldn't want to live there," I said.

"Why not?" said Debbie, playing right into my hands.

"Well, the climate is forbidding. There are no trees on any of the 100 or more islands in the group. The ground is rocky and very little plant life can grow on it."

"I don't think I'd even care to visit," she said.

The fire drill was over and we began to file into the building, so I had to step it up to get the natives in. "The Aleuts are short and sturdy and have dark skin and black hair. They subsist on fish, and they trap blue fox, seal, and otter for their valuable fur."

Debbie's hazel eyes widened in amazement. She was undoubtedly beginning to realize that she wasn't dealing with an ordinary lunkhead. She was gaining new and valuable insights instead of engaging in the routine small talk one would expect from most sophomores.

Luck was on my side, too. One day I was browsing through the library during my study period. I spotted Debbie sitting at a table, absorbed in a crossword puzzle. She was frowning, apparently stumped on a word. I leaned over and asked if I could help.

"Four-letter word for Oriental female servant," Debbie said.

"Try *amah*," I said, quick as a flash.

Debbie filled in the blanks, then turned to stare at me in amazement. "I don't believe it," she said. "I just don't believe it."

And so it went, that glorious, amorous, joyous sophomore year. Debbie seemed to relish our little conversations and hung on my every word. Naturally, the more I read, the more my confidence

grew. I expatiated<sup>5</sup> freely on such topics as adenoids,<sup>6</sup> air brakes, and arthritis.

In the classroom, too, I was gradually making my presence felt. Among my classmates, I was developing a reputation as a wheeler-dealer in data. One day, during a discussion of Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner," we came across the word *albatross*.

"Can anyone tell us what an albatross is?" asked Mrs. Larrivee.

My hand shot up. "The albatross is a large bird that lives mostly in the ocean regions below the equator, but may be found in the north Pacific as well. The albatross measures as long as four feet and has the greatest wingspread of any bird. It feeds on the surface of the ocean, where it catches shellfish. The albatross is a very voracious<sup>7</sup> eater. When it is full it has trouble getting into the air again."

There was a long silence in the room. Mrs. Larrivee couldn't quite believe what she had just heard. I sneaked a peek at Debbie and gave her a big wink. She beamed proudly and winked back.

It was a great feeling, having Debbie and Mrs. Larrivee and my peers according me respect and paying attention when I spoke.

My grades edged upward and my father no longer tried to avoid me when I brought home my report card. I continued reading the encyclopedia diligently, packing more and more into my brain.

What I failed to perceive was that Debbie all this while was going steady with a junior from a neighboring school—a hockey player with a C+ average. The revelation hit me hard, and for a while I felt like disgorging<sup>8</sup> and forgetting everything I had learned. I had saved enough money to buy Volume II—Asthma to Bullfinch—but was strongly tempted to invest in a hockey stick instead.

How could she lead me on like that—smiling and concurring and giving me the impression that I was important?

I felt not only hurt, but betrayed. Like Agamemnon, but with less dire consequences, thank God.

In time I recovered from my wounds. The next year Debbie moved from the neighborhood and transferred to another school. Soon she became no more than a fleeting memory.

<sup>4</sup>expatiated: to speak or write at length.

<sup>6</sup>adenoids: masses of tissue that obstruct nasal and ear passages into the throat.

<sup>7</sup>voracious: excessively eager.

<sup>8</sup>disgorging: discharging violently; vomiting.

<sup>4</sup>sidled: approached sideways or in a stealthy manner.

Although the original incentive was gone, I continued poring over 43  
the encyclopedias, as well as an increasing number of other books.  
Having savored the heady wine of knowledge, I could not now alter  
my course. For:

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing:  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

So wrote Alexander Pope, Volume XIV, Paprika to Pterodactyl. 44

### THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THIS SELECTION

1. In paragraph 43 Brody states, “Although the original incentive was gone, I continued poring over the encyclopedias, as well as an increasing number of other books.” What was Brody’s “original incentive”? What other incentive did Brody have to continue his quest to learn?

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2. How are paragraphs 2 and 3, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 31 and 32, and 43 and 44 linked? (Transitions)

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3. Brody uses dialogue to tell his story in paragraphs 10-35. (Dialogue) What does the dialogue add to his narrative? What would have been lost had he simply told his readers what happened?

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4. Brody refers to Coleridge’s “The Ancient Mariner” in paragraph 33 and to Agamemnon in paragraph 41, and he quotes Alexander Pope in paragraph 43. Use an encyclopedia to explain Brody’s allusions.

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5. Comment on the effectiveness of the beginning and ending of Brody’s essay.

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### NARRATIVE TIME

The number of words or paragraphs a writer devotes to the retelling of an event does not usually correspond to the number of minutes or hours the event took to happen. A writer may require multiple paragraphs to recount an important or complex 10-15 minute encounter, but then pass over several hours, days, or even years in several sentences. In narration, length has less to do with chronological time than with the amount of detail the writer includes, and that’s a function of the amount of emphasis the writer wants to give to a particular incident.

*Identify several passages in Brody’s essay where he uses multiple paragraphs to retell a relatively brief encounter and where he uses only a paragraph or two to cover a long period of time. Why do you suppose Brody chose to tell his story in this manner?*



## LANGSTON HUGHES

*A poet, fiction writer, playwright, critic, and humorist, Langston Hughes described his writing as "largely concerned with depicting Negro life in America." He was born in 1902 in Joplin, Missouri, and grew up in Illinois, Kansas, and Ohio. After dropping out of Columbia University in the early 1920s, Hughes worked at odd jobs while struggling to gain recognition as a writer. His first book of poems, *The Weary Blues* (1925), helped seed the Harlem Renaissance, a flowering of African American music and literature centered in the Harlem district of New York City during the 1920s. The book also generated a scholarship that enabled Hughes to finish college at Lincoln University. In all of his work—including *The Negro Mother* (1931), *The Ways of White Folks* (1934), *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942), *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), *Ask Your Mama* (1961), and *The Best of Simple* (1961)—Hughes captured and projected the rhythms of jazz and the distinctive speech, subtle humor, and deep traditions of African American people. He died in New York City in 1967.*

## Salvation

*A chapter in Hughes's autobiography, *The Big Sea* (1940), "Salvation" is a simple yet compelling narrative about a moment of deceit and disillusionment for a boy of twelve. As you read Hughes's account, notice how the opening two sentences set up every twist of the story.*

I was saved from sin when I was going on thirteen. But not really saved. It happened like this. There was a big revival at my Auntie Reed's church. Every night for weeks there had been much preaching, singing, praying, and shouting, and some very hardened sinners had been brought to Christ, and the membership of the church had grown by leaps and bounds. Then just before the revival ended, they held a special meeting for children, "to bring the young lambs to the fold." My aunt spoke of it for days ahead. That night, I was escorted to the front row and placed on the mourner's bench with all the other young sinners, who had not yet been brought to Jesus.

My aunt told me that when you were saved you saw a light, and something happened to you inside! And Jesus came into your life!

And God was with you from then on! She said you could see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul. I believed her. I have heard a great many old people say the same thing and it seemed to me they ought to know. So I sat there calmly in the hot, crowded church, waiting for Jesus to come to me.

The preacher preached a wonderful rhythmical sermon, all moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell, and then he sang a song about the ninety and nine safe in the fold, but one little lamb was left out in the cold. Then he said: "Won't you come? Won't you come to Jesus? Young lambs, won't you come?" And he held out his arms to all us young sinners there on the mourner's bench. And the little girls cried. And some of them jumped up and went to Jesus right away. But most of us just sat there.

A great many old people came and knelt around us and prayed, old women with jet-black faces and braided hair, old men with work-gnarled hands. And the church sang a song about the lower lights are burning, some poor sinners to be saved. And the whole building rocked with prayer and song.

Still I kept waiting to see Jesus.

Finally all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me. He was a rounder's son named Westley. Westley and I were surrounded by sisters and deacons praying. It was very hot in the church, and getting late now. Finally Westley said to me in a whisper: "God damn! I'm tired o' sitting here. Let's get up and be saved." So he got up and was saved.

Then I was left all alone on the mourner's bench. My aunt came and knelt at my knees and cried, while prayers and songs swirled all around me in the little church. The whole congregation prayed for me alone, in a mighty wail of moans and voices. And I kept waiting serenely for Jesus, waiting, waiting—but he didn't come. I wanted to see him, but nothing happened to me. Nothing! I wanted something to happen to me, but nothing happened.

I heard the songs and the minister saying: "Why don't you come? My dear child, why don't you come to Jesus? Jesus is waiting for you. He wants you. Why don't you come? Sister Reed, what is this child's name?"

"Langston," my aunt sobbed.

"Langston, why don't you come? Why don't you come and be saved? Oh, Lamb of God! Why don't you come?"

Now it was really getting late. I began to be ashamed of myself, holding everything up so long. I began to wonder what God thought about Westley, who certainly hadn't seen Jesus either, but who was



now sitting proudly on the platform, swinging his knickerbockered legs and grinning down at me, surrounded by deacons and old women on their knees praying. God had not struck Westley dead for taking his name in vain or for lying in the temple. So I decided that maybe to save further trouble, I'd better lie, too, and say that Jesus had come, and get up and be saved.

So I got up.

Suddenly the whole room broke into a sea of shouting, as they saw me rise. Waves of rejoicing swept the place. Women leaped in the air. My aunt threw her arms around me. The minister took me by the hand and led me to the platform.

When things quieted down, in a hushed silence, punctuated by a few ecstatic "Amen," all the new young lambs were blessed in the name of God. Then joyous singing filled the room.

That night, for the last time in my life but one—for I was a big boy twelve years old—I cried. I cried, in bed alone, and couldn't stop. I buried my head under the quilts, but my aunt heard me. She woke up and told my uncle I was crying because the Holy Ghost had come into my life, and because I had seen Jesus. But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, that I hadn't seen Jesus, and that now I didn't believe there was a Jesus anymore, since he didn't come to help me.

## PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

- How do dialogue, lines from hymns, and details of other sounds (paragraphs 3-10) help re-create the increasing pressure Hughes feels? What other details contribute to this sense of pressure?

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## METHOD AND STRUCTURE

- Where in his narrative does Hughes insert explanations, compress time by summarizing events, or jump ahead in time by omitting events? Where does he expand time by drawing moments out? How does each of these insertions and manipulations of time relate to Hughes's main point?

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## THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THIS SELECTION

### MEANING

- What is the main point of Hughes's narrative? What change occurs in him as a result of his experience?

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- What finally makes Hughes decide to get up and be saved? How does this decision affect him afterward?

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- In paragraph 1 Hughes uses several transitions to signal the sequence of events and the passage of time: "For weeks," "Then just before," "For days ahead," "That night." Where does he use similar signals in the rest of the essay?

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## ANNIE DILLARD

*A poet and essayist, Annie Dillard is part naturalist, part mystic. She was born in 1945 in Pittsburgh. Growing up in that city, she was an independent child given to exploration and reading. (As an adult, she reads nearly a hundred books a year.) After graduating from Hollins College in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Dillard settled in the area to investigate her natural surroundings and to write. Her early books were Tickets for a Prayer Wheel (1974), a collection of poems, and Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (1974), a series of related essays that demonstrate Dillard's intense, passionate involvement with the world of nature and the world of the mind. Pilgrim earned her national recognition and a Pulitzer Prize. It was followed by Holy the Firm (1977), a prose poem; Teaching a Stone to Talk (1982), a collection of essays; Living by Fiction (1982), a collection of critical essays; Encounters with Chinese Writers (1984); the autobiography An American Childhood (1987); The Writing Life (1989); and The Living (1992). More recently, Dillard published a collection of essays, For the Time Being (1999). In 1999 she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.*

## The Chase

*In her autobiography, An American Childhood, Dillard's enthusiasm for life in its many forms colors her recollections of her own youth. "The Chase" (editor's title) is a self-contained chapter from the book that narrates a few minutes of glorious excitement.*

Some boys taught me to play football. This was fine sport. You thought up a new strategy for every play and whispered it to the others. You went out for a pass, fooling everyone. Best, you got to throw yourself mightily at someone's running legs. Either you brought him down or you hit the ground flat out on your chin, with your arms empty before you. It was all or nothing. If you hesitated in fear, you would miss and get hurt: you would take a hard fall while the kid got away, or you would get kicked in the face while the kid got away. But if you flung yourself wholeheartedly at the back of his knees—if you gathered and joined body and soul and pointed them diving fearlessly—then you

likely wouldn't get hurt, and you'd stop the ball. Your fate, and your team's score, depended on your concentration and courage. Nothing girls did could compare with it.

Boys welcomed me at baseball, too, for I had, through enthusiastic practice, what was weirdly known as a boy's arm. In winter, in the snow, there was neither baseball nor football, so the boys and I threw snowballs at passing cars. I got in trouble throwing snowballs, and have seldom been happier since.

On one weekday morning after Christmas, six inches of new snow had just fallen. We were standing up to our boot tops in snow on a front yard on trafficked Reynolds Street, waiting for cars. The cars traveled Reynolds Street slowly and evenly; they were targets all but wrapped in red ribbons, cream puffs. We couldn't miss.

I was seven; the boys were eight, nine, and ten. The oldest two Fahey boys were there—Mikey and Peter—polite blond boys who lived near me on Lloyd Street, and who already had four brothers and sisters. My parents approved of Mikey and Peter Fahey. Chickie McBride was there, a tough kid, and Billy Paul and Mackie Kean too, from across Reynolds, where the boys grew up dark and furious, grew up skinny, knowing, and skilled. We had all drifted from our houses that morning looking for action, and had found it here on Reynolds Street.

It was cloudy but cold. The cars' tires laid behind them on the snowy street a complex trail of beige chunks like crenellated castle walls. I had stepped on some earlier; they squeaked. We could have wished for more traffic. When a car came, we all popped it one. In the intervals between cars we reverted to the natural solitude of children.

I started making an iceball—a perfect iceball, from perfectly white snow, perfectly spherical, and squeezed perfectly translucent so no snow remained all the way through. (The Fahey boys and I considered it unfair actually to throw an iceball at somebody, but it had been known to happen.)

I had just embarked on the iceball project when we heard tire chains come clanking from afar. A black Buick was moving toward us down the street. We all spread out, banged together some regular snowballs, took aim, and, when the Buick drew nigh, fired.

A soft snowball hit the driver's windshield right before the driver's face. It made a smashed star with a hump in the middle.

Often, of course, we hit our target, but this time, the only time in all of life, the car pulled over and stopped. Its wide black door



opened; a man got out of it, running. He didn't even close the car door.

He ran after us, and we ran away from him, up the snowy Reynolds sidewalk. At the corner, I looked back; incredibly, he was still after us. He was in city clothes: a suit and tie, street shoes. Any normal adult would have quit, having sprung us into flight and made his point. This man was gaining on us. He was a thin man, all action. All of a sudden, we were running for our lives.

Wordless, we split up. We were on our turf; we could lose ourselves in the neighborhood backyards, everyone for himself. I paused and considered. Everyone had vanished except Mike Fahey, who was just rounding the corner of a yellow brick house. Poor Mikey, I trailed him. The driver of the Buick sensibly picked the two of us to follow. The man apparently had all day.

He chased Mikey and me around the yellow house and up a backyard path we knew by heart: under a low tree, up a bank, through a hedge, down some snowy steps, and across the grocery store's delivery driveway. We smashed through a gap in another hedge, entered a scruffy backyard and ran around its back porch and tight between houses to Edgerton Avenue; we ran across Edgerton to an alley and up our own sliding woodpile to the Halls' front yard; he kept coming. We ran up Lloyd Street and wound through mazy backyards toward the steep hilltop at Willard and Lang.

He chased us silently, block after block. He chased us silently over picket fences, through thorny hedges, between houses, around garbage cans, and across streets. Every time I glanced back, choking for breath, I expected he would have quit. He must have been as breathless as we were. His jacket strained over his body. It was an immense discovery, pounding into my hot head with every sliding, joyous step, that this ordinary adult evidently knew what I thought only children who trained at football knew: that you have to fling yourself at what you're doing, you have to point yourself, forget yourself, aim, dive.

Mikey and I had nowhere to go, in our own neighborhood or out of it, but away from this man who was chasing us. He impelled us forward; we compelled him to follow our route. The air was cold; every breath tore my throat. We kept running, block after block; we kept improvising, backyard after backyard, running a frantic course and choosing it simultaneously, failing always to find small places or hard places to slow him down, and discovering always, exhilarated, dismayed, that only bare speed could save us—for he would never give up, this man—and we were losing speed.

He chased us through the backyard labyrinths of ten blocks before he caught us by our jackets. He caught us and we all stopped.

We three stood staggering, half blinded, coughing, in an obscure hilltop backyard: a man in his twenties, a boy, a girl. He had released our jackets, our pursuer, our captor, our hero: he knew we weren't going anywhere. We all played by the rules. Mikey and I unzipped our jackets. I pulled off my sopping mittens. Our tracks multiplied in the backyard's new snow. We had been breaking new snow all morning. We didn't look at each other. I was cherishing my excitement. The man's lower pants legs were wet; his cuffs were full of snow, and there was a prow of snow beneath them on his shoes and socks. Some trees bordered the little flat backyard, some messy winter trees. There was no one around: a clearing in a grove, and we the only players.

It was a long time before he could speak. I had some difficulty at first recalling why we were there. My lips felt swollen; I couldn't see out of the sides of my eyes; I kept coughing.

"You stupid kids," he began perfunctorily.

We listened perfunctorily indeed, if we listened at all, for the chewing out was redundant, a mere formality, and beside the point. The point was that he had chased us passionately without giving up, and so he had caught us. Now he came down to earth, I wanted the glory to last forever.

But how could the glory have lasted forever? We could have run through every backyard in North America until we got to Panama. But when he trapped us at the lip of the Panama Canal, what precisely could he have done to prolong the drama of the chase and cap its glory? I brooded about this for the next few years. He could only have fried Mikey Fahey and me in boiling oil, say, or dismembered us piecemeal, or staked us to anthills. None of which I really wanted, and none of which any adult was likely to do, even in the spirit of fun. He could only chew us out there in the Panamanian jungle, after months or years of exalting pursuit. He could only begin, "You stupid kids," and continue in his ordinary Pittsburgh accent with his normal righteous anger and the usual common sense.

If in that snowy backyard the driver of the black Buick had cut off our heads, Mikey's and mine, I would have died happy, for nothing has required so much of me since as being chased all over Pittsburgh in the middle of winter—running terrified, exhausted—by this sainted, skinny, furious red-headed man who wished to have a word with us. I don't know how he found his way back to his car.

## THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT THIS SELECTION

### MEANING

1. What lesson did Dillard learn from the experience of the chase? Where is her point explicitly revealed?

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### PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

2. In her first paragraph, Dillard deliberately shifts from the first-person point of view (using *me*) to the second (using *you*). What is the effect of this shift, and how does it contribute to Dillard's purpose?

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### METHOD AND STRUCTURE

3. In this straightforward narrative, Dillard expands some events and summarizes others: for instance, she provides much more detail about the chase in paragraph 12 than in paragraphs 13 and 14. Why might she first provide and then pull back from the detail in paragraph 12?

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4. How does the last sentence of paragraph 2—"I got in trouble throwing snowballs, and have seldom been happier since"—serve to set up the story Dillard is out to tell?

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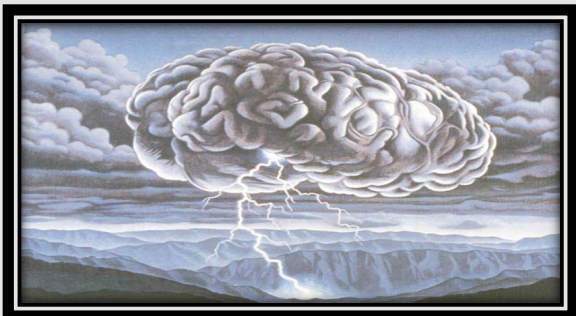


**SELECTING A TOPIC...** Think of a specific incident in your life that you think is worth sharing; probe your own experiences for a situation such as an argument involving strong emotion, a humorous or embarrassing incident, a dramatic scene you witnessed, or a learning experience like a job.

*Write about something you care about so that narration is a means of communicating an*

**BRAINSTORM:** List as many **events** in your life as possible. Determine the best event to write about by deciding which event has a **conflict** and can **make a point**.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_



## HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED?

### **FAMILY**

- What's a time with a parent, grandparent, or other family member that I'll never forget? How did it change me?
- What's an incident that shows how my family and I are changing?
- What's something that happened to me in school or at home that I will always remember?
- What's a time that I made my family and friends proud?

### **FRIENDS AND SCHOOL**

- What's an incident that shows how my friends and I are changing?
- What's an incident that shows what I'm like in school and how I'm growing?
- What's something that happened to me at school or with my friends that I'll always remember?
- What's an incident that changed how I think or feel about school?
- What's an incident that changed how my friends or my teachers think of me?
- What's a time I learned to do something I didn't think I could do?

### **EMOTIONS**

- What's a moment that I was perfectly happy?
- What's a moment when it felt as if my heart were breaking?
- What's a time when I was very proud of myself?
- What's a time that was difficult to face but I did it?
- What's a time that was difficult to face, so I didn't but I wish I had?

### **MILESTONES**

- What is the most important event that has happened to me in my life so far? Why was it so important?
- What have I seen that I can never forget?
- What's a time when I learned to deal with a situation? How did I learn it?
- What's a time when I learned something about life, others, or myself?
- What's a time that I decided to change something about my own behavior?
- What's a time when I felt myself grow up?
- What's a time when I felt my attitude change toward: School, Home, Family, Friends, or Myself.

## MY WRITING PLAN

The one event I want to write about is

The most important way that I changed during this event was

The minor (events), details, characters, or descriptions I need to show the change is/are

How was I before I changed?

What are some details I need to include to show this?

What happened to make me change? (This will be the event, the big story you're telling!!)

What are some details I need to include to show what happened to the reader?

How did I think/behave differently after the event?

What are some details I need to include to show how I changed?



**ORGANIZING YOUR NARRATIVE ...** Since narratives are usually told in **chronological order**, you can use a time line to organize your details. Below is the first part of an example time line. At the top, the writer listed each key action, with the corresponding mood in parentheses. Beneath the line, the writer listed details related to the action.

**EXPLORE YOUR SUBJECT BY LISTING ALL THE EVENTS IN SEQUENCE AS THEY HAPPENED.** (Who was involved? What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Why did it happen? How did it happen?)

Decide which events should be **developed** in great detail because they are central to your point; which should be **brief** because they merely contribute background or tie the main events together; And which should be **omitted** altogether because they add nothing to your point and might clutter your narrative.

**ARRANGING YOUR EVENTS...** The arrangement of events in the body of your essay depends on the actual order in which they occurred and the point you want to make.

- *A straight chronological sequence is usually the easiest to manage because it relates events in the order of their actual occurrence. It is particularly useful for short narratives, for those in which the last event is the most dramatic, or for those in which the events preceding and following the climax contribute to the point being made.*
- *The final event, such as a self-revelation, may come first and then examined in detail.*
- *The entire story may be summarized first and then examined in detail.*
- *Flashbacks (shifts backward rather than forward in time) may recall events whose significance would not have been apparent earlier. Flashbacks are common in movies and fiction: a character in the midst of one scene mentally replays a different scene.*

#### Examples:

- To narrate a trip during which one thing after another went wrong, you might find a strict **chronological** order most effective.
- To narrate an earthquake that began and ended in an instant, you might sort simultaneous events into groups-say, what happened to buildings, and what happened to people-or you might arrange a few people's experiences in **order of increasing** drama.
- To narrate your experience of city life, you might interweave events in the city with **contrasting** flashbacks to your life in a small town, or you might start by relating one especially bad

#### EXAMPLE

Pre-game (Anticipation)	On the field (Excitement)	Start of Game (Energy)
Soft rain Teammates by me Jog out to a roar	Harder rain Cheering fans Game plan yelled	Kickoff Run toward offense Find my man

#### LIST OF EVENTS IN SEQUENTIAL ORDER

CHECK **ONE** BOX NEXT TO EACH EVENT LISTED BELOW.

**EVENT 1:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**EVENT 2:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**EVENT 3:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**EVENT 4:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**EVENT 5:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**EVENT 6:**

☐ Develop  
☐ Brief  
☐ Omit

**TRANSITIONS...** are words or phrases that tie your details together in your writing so that they read smoothly.

Whether you are relating events in strict chronological order or manipulating them for some effect, try to make their sequence in real time and the distance between them clear to readers. Instead of signaling sequence with the monotonous *and then... and then... and then* or *next.... next... next*, use informative **transitions** that signal the order of events (afterward, earlier), the duration of events (for an hour, in that time), or the amount of time between events (the next morning, a week later).

While  
in between the time  
during  
Just as  
the following day  
then  
Next  
by 4 o'clock  
suddenly  
The next day  
almost as quickly  
at dusk  
At dawn  
when we arrived  
an hour later  
Finally  
at the same time  
afterwards  
As soon as  
right away

when  
After  
in the meantime  
later  
Later on  
some time later  
before  
Quickly  
in just a few short minutes  
that night  
After that  
hours went by  
a day later  
Immediately  
at first I saw  
never  
As  
in the late afternoon  
meanwhile



**POINT OF VIEW...** is the vantage point from which the story is told. In the first person point of view, the story is told by one of the characters: "I remember the summer I turned sixteen." In the third-person point of view, the story is told by someone outside the story: "The old man shuffled across the street. He looked down at the ground as he walked." There are three types of third person points of view:

- **Omniscient** point of view allows the narrator to share the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.
  - **Limited** point of view allows the narrator to share the thoughts and feelings of one central character.
  - **Camera view** (objective view) allows the storyteller to record the action from his or her own point of view, being unaware of any of the characters' thoughts or feelings.
- Pronouns indicate your place in the story: the first-person I if you are a direct participant; the third-person he, she, it, and they if you are an observer or reporter.
  - Verb tense indicates your relation in time to the sequence of events: present (is, run) or past (was, ran).



**HOOKING YOUR READER...** Start your narrative right in the action. Doing so will immediately get your reader's attention.

**BEGIN BY DRAWING THE READER IN WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Describing one of the more dramatic events in the sequence of your story
- Setting the scene for your narrative by describing your surroundings
- Summarize the events leading up to the main event.

**BELOW, PRACTICE WRITING YOUR INTRODUCTION USING THE ABOVE METHODS.**

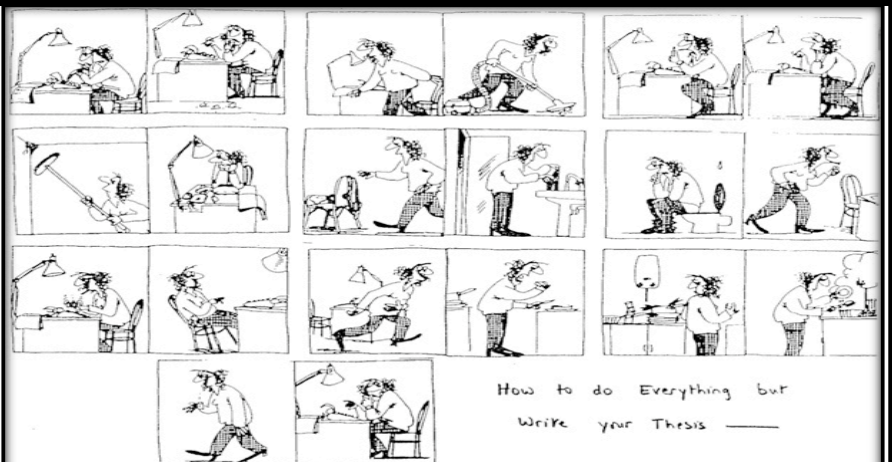
## Introduction 1:

[illegible]

## Introduction 2:

[illegible]

**WHERE'S MY POINT?** The introduction may lead to a statement of your thesis so that readers know why you are bothering to tell them your story. Then again, to intensify the drama of your story you may decide to withhold your thesis sentence for the conclusion or omit it altogether. (Remember, though, that the thesis must be evident to readers even if it isn't stated: **THE NARRATIVE NEEDS A POINT**)



## KEEPING THE READER

**INTERESTED...** Let the reader feel as if the experience is unfolding right before him or her. You can do this by showing the reader the experience rather than telling him or her about it.

**Use Sensory details.** Sensory details allow your reader to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the same things you did.

Telling	Showing
We at a delicious Thanksgiving dinner.	The skin of the turkey crackled as Uncle Bill carved it, and steam rose, curling out above mounds of sage dressing.

**Use specific action.** Describe exactly what happens. Special details help the reader visualize the action.

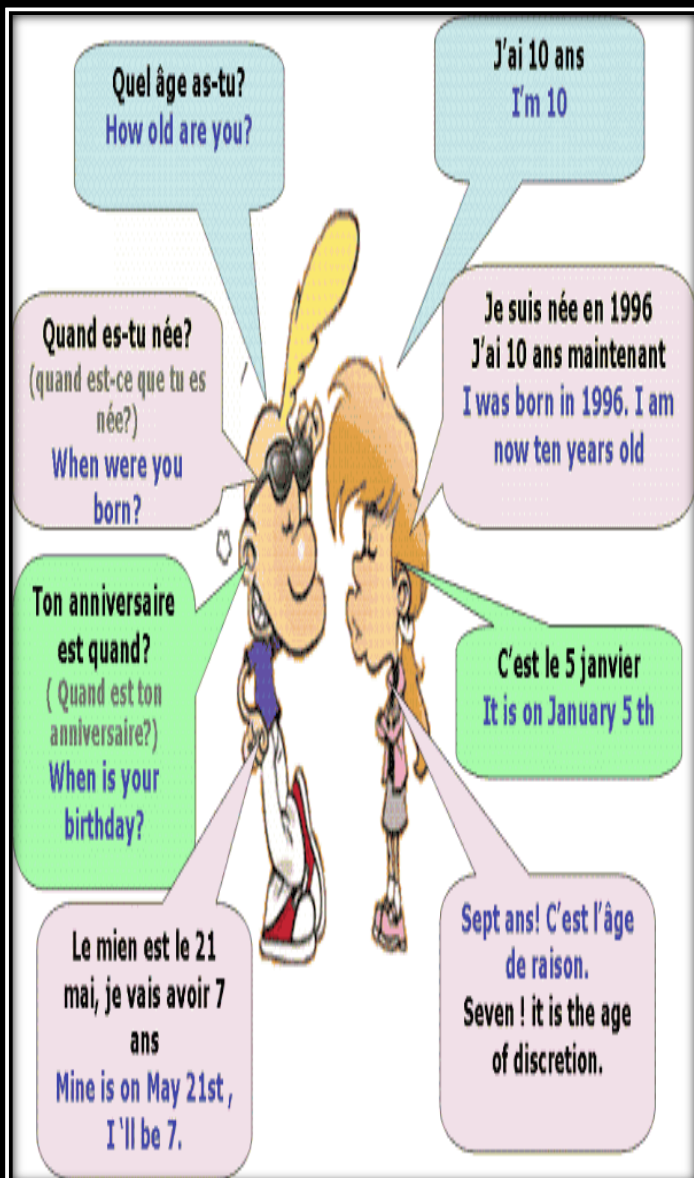
Telling	Showing
Our car went out of control and went into a ditch.	Our car hit ice and fishtailed. Dad wrenched the wheel toward the skid, but it was too late. The sedan slid sideways, tipped, and rolled over into the ditch.

**Use dialogue.** Let the people in your narrative speak for themselves. Use words that reveal their unique voices.

Telling	Showing
My friends Jana and Ella couldn't agree on what kind of pizza to order.	<p>"Anchovies?" Jana said. "You gotta be crazy. Who eats anchovies?"</p> <p>"I do," Ella replied. "But I could also go for a ham and pineapple."</p> <p>"Ham and pineapple!"</p>

**BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.** Tell what the people in your narrative were wearing, what expressions their faces held, how they gestured, what they said. Specify the time of day, and describe the weather and the surroundings (buildings, vegetation, etc.) All these details may be familiar to you, but they won't be to your readers.

**DIALOGUE** can add immediacy and realism as long as it advances the narrative and doesn't ramble beyond its usefulness. In reconstructing dialogue from memory, try to recall not only the actual words but also the sounds of speakers' voices and the expressions on their faces—information that will help you represent each speaker distinctly.





**ENDING YOUR NARRATIVE...** Let the ending of your essay be determined by the effect you want to leave with readers. Consider the following:

- Describe the last event in your sequence, or one you have saved for last, *if it conveys your point and provides a strong finish.*
- Summarize the aftermath of the story *if it contributes to the point.*
- End with a formal conclusion that states your point (your *thesis*) explicitly

**BELOW, PRACTICE ENDING YOUR CONCLUSION USING THE ABOVE METHODS.**

**Conclusion 1:**

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**Conclusion 2:**

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"I'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT  
LIFE IS JUST A BOWL OF WATER."

**STRATEGIES TO AVOID IN ALL KINDS OF WRITING...**

- Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase such as "in conclusion," "in summary," or "in closing." Although these phrases can work in speeches, they come across as wooden and trite in writing.
- Stating the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion.
- Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion.
- Ending with a rephrased thesis statement without any substantive changes.
- Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of an analytical paper.
- Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper.

# REVISING

**IMPROVING YOUR WRITING...** Read over your first draft (silently and aloud) to check for its overall effectiveness. Use the six traits of writing as a revising guide.

- **Ideas:** Do I focus on a specific event or experience? Do I use details and dialogue to show instead of tell? Does my narrative make the reader want to know what happens next?
- **Organization:** Do I hook the reader's attention in the beginning? Does my narrative flow smoothly as if I were sharing it with a friend? Do I include events in the order that they occurred? Is there a satisfying resolution or ending?
- **Voice:** Does my narrative have a tone that fits the topic? Does my personality come through in my writing?
- **Word Choice:** Do I use specific, concrete nouns to make a clear image? Do I use active verbs to tell what happens? Have I used words that have the right feeling (connotation)?
- **Sentence Fluency:** Do I begin sentences in a variety of ways? Do I use sentences of different lengths?
- **Is the point of your narrative clear, and does every event you relate contribute to it?** Whether or not you state your thesis, it should be obvious to readers. They should be able to see why you have lingered over some events and compressed others, and they should not be distracted by insignificant events and details.
- **Is your organization clear?** Be sure that your readers will understand any shifts backward or forward in time.

- **Have you used transitions to help readers follow the sequence of events?** Transitions such as meanwhile or soon afterward serve a dual purpose: they keep the reader on track, and they link sentences and paragraphs so that they flow smoothly.
- **If you have used dialogue, is it purposeful and natural?** Be sure all quoted speeches move the action ahead. And read all dialogue aloud to check that it sounds like something someone would actually say.

# EDITING

**CHECKING FOR CONVENTIONS...** Once you have finished revising your narrative, make sure your work adheres to the rules of English.

- **Conventions:** Have I checked for punctuations, mechanics, and grammar errors?





## KENTUCKY CORE CONTENT

### PERSONAL EXPRESSIVE WRITING

#### **CONTENT: PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE WR-HS-1.1.2**

- Students will communicate the significance of the writer's life experience by narrating about life events, relationships or central ideas.
- Students will apply the characteristics of the selected form (e.g., personal narrative, personal memoir, personal essay).
- Students will sustain point of view.
- Students will sustain a suitable tone or appropriate voice.

#### **CONTENT: IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT WR-HS-1.2.2**

- Students will communicate theme/main idea through use of literary elements appropriate to the genre:
  - Students will develop characters (fictional /non-fictional) through emotions, actions, reactions, descriptions, thoughts, or dialogue when appropriate.
  - Students will develop plot/story line appropriate to the form.
- Students will develop an appropriate setting, mood, scene, image or feeling.
- Students will incorporate literary or poetic devices (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification) for an intentional effect.
- Students will incorporate reflection, insight and analysis when appropriate.

#### **STRUCTURE: ORGANIZATION WR-HS-2.3.2**

- Students will engage the interest of the reader.
- Students will communicate ideas and details in meaningful order.
- Students will apply organizational devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback) when appropriate.
- Students will apply a variety of transitions or transitional elements between ideas and details to guide the reader.
- Students will apply effective paragraphing.
- Students will arrange poetic stanzas in a way that enhances the meaning through the use of white space, line breaks and shape.
- Students will create effective conclusions.

#### **STRUCTURE: SENTENCE STRUCTURE/VARIETY WR-HS-2.4.2**

- Students will develop sentences of various structures and lengths for effect.
- Students will maintain parallel structure.
- Students will develop complete sentences or apply unconventional structures for an intentional effect when appropriate.
- Students will arrange poetic language in a meaningful order.
- Students will apply poetic line breaks effectively.

#### **CONVENTIONS: LANGUAGE WR-HS-3.5.2**

- Students will adhere to standard guidelines for grammar and usage or apply nonstandard for an intentional effect.
- Students will incorporate language based on economy, precision, richness or impact on the reader.
- Students will develop ideas through descriptive or figurative language.

#### **CONVENTIONS: CORRECTNESS WR-HS-3.6.0**

Students will communicate clearly by

- Applying correct spelling
- Applying correct punctuation
- Applying correct capitalization
- Incorporating acceptable departure from standard correctness to enhance meaning when appropriate
- Incorporating appropriate documentation of ideas and information from outside sources (e.g., citing authors or titles within the text, listing sources, documenting sources in text and/or on a Works Cited page)