a self-contained student writing unit,
complete with instruction, guidelines,
activities, and writing space
Consulting Educators

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Linda Albertson
Amita Antao
Lisa Ariens
Connie Blair
Robert Day
Pauline Eadie
Rhoda Goodwin
Marguerite Guy
Jerry Hajewski
Mark Harris
Shirley Minga
Rhoda Nathan
Elhadji Ndaw
Trinette Patterson
Regina Peña
Colleen Rourke
Mora Snowden
Seth Sondag
Yolanda Tynes
Jackie Velth
Larry Vernon
Agnes V. Williams
Gail Winograd

Field-Test Reviewers

Daniel Addis
Jack Yates High School
Houston, Texas
Carol Glass
Samuel Tilden High School
Brooklyn, New York
Oleta Rhoads
Steelville High School
Steelville, Missouri
James Belk
Hughes Center
Cincinnati, Ohio
Sarah Goldammer
North Community High School
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Ruth Roose
Omaha Home for Boys
Omaha, Nebraska
Kay Caillouette
Sequoya High School
Redwood City, California
Carmen S. Marietta-Francisco
Central High School
Bridgeport, Connecticut
Thomas G. Smith
T. S. Weaver High School
Hartford, Connecticut
Daniel Ferris
Interdistrict Downtown School
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Deborah Matthews
Austin Community Academy High School
Chicago, Illinois
Edrieanne Votto
Venice High School
Los Angeles, California
Judy Gardner
L. W. Higgins High School
Marrero, Louisiana
Mecca Murphy
Fenger Academy
Chicago, Illinois
Agnes V. Williams
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Authors

Dave Kemper and Pat Sebranek

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Planning Notes:
Narratives

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Unit Overview:

Narratives

As with all Inside Writing units, the narrative writing unit is ready to put in the hands of your students. Everything students need to complete their work is included in this booklet.

In the unit, students are asked to write about an experience that changed them in some way, that opened up their minds to a new way of thinking. The unit includes a sample narrative from A Call to Assembly, an autobiography by musician Willie Ruff. In this sample, Ruff recalls a special moment in his life when he was introduced to a language that turned his “ten-year-old mind completely upside down.”

Rationale

- In the “Universe of Discourse,” the narrative is one of the most accessible forms of writing for students to develop.
- All students have had an experience or experiences that are important to them and worth sharing with others.
- Students can learn to shape their experiences into narratives that have effective beginnings, middles, and endings.
- Narrative writing is included on most district and state assessment tests.

Major Concepts

- A personal narrative is a story about an important event in an individual’s life. It is made up of a series of related actions (first one thing happened, then another thing, and so on).
- A narrative must go through a series of steps—prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing and proofreading—before it is ready to be published.
- Assessment is an important part of the writing process.

Strategies and Skills That Students Will Practice

- Using a 5 Ws and H chart to gather details
- Identifying key features in narrative writing
- Writing the beginning, middle, and ending parts of a narrative
- Adding personal thoughts
- Adding effective details
- Using specific verbs
- Punctuating dialogue
- Evaluating narratives using an assessment rubric

Performance Standards

Students are expected to . . .

- use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.
- create an engaging story by employing detail, dialogue, personal feelings, and explanations (when necessary).
- revise and edit their writing, striving for completeness, personal voice, specific word choice, smooth-reading sentences, and correctness.

Reinforcing Skills

- Students can use either the Writers INC or the Write Ahead handbook for additional instructions related to writing narratives. (See page 16TE for handbook correlations.)
- Editing and proofreading skills can be reinforced and expanded by implementing exercises from Inside Writing Skills available for each level. (See page 7TE for suggestions.)
### Weekly Planning Chart

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Narratives: Planning Notes 3TE
**Daily Lesson Plans: Week One**

**DAY 1**

**Understanding the Unit**

**Reviewing the Unit Basics**
- Discuss “About the Unit” (inside front cover). Note that the intended audience is the students’ classmates. Students will be expected to share their finished writing in class.
- Review the table of contents and “Checklist: Narrative Writing” (pages 1-2). Students can use the checklist to keep track of their assignments. (Consider establishing due dates for each assignment.)

**ESL TIP** Refer to the checklist each day, write the content and language objectives in a prominent place, and explain them orally for ESL students.

- Read out loud and discuss page 3. Emphasize that an effective narrative helps the reader to see, hear, and feel an experience. Also remind students that they should not give too much background information in a personal narrative; it’s almost always best to get into the actual experience as soon as possible.
- Discuss the quotation (page 3). Ask students what Joyce Carol Thomas means when she says that she likes to write “as though my readers are without television, radio, movies, or anything else.”

**Completing a Narrative Warm-Up Activity**
- The purpose of this activity is to help students think of personal stories (page 4). Specifically, they are asked to write about their early years in school. Remind students to keep the ideas flowing as freely and rapidly as possible. In this way, they will unlock a number of different personal stories. The purpose of this activity is also to put students in a narrative-writing mode and to have some fun in the process.

**DAY 2**

**Working with a Professional Narrative**

**Reading a Sample Narrative**

*Optional:* Implement “Prereading Activity” (page 9TE), which deals with the concept of “a chance encounter.” In this activity, students are asked to explain the concept and share memorable chance encounters.

*Optional:* Introduce the sample by sharing the opening paragraph on page 9TE. Also consider sharing “Author Bio” on the same page.

- Have the students read the sample narrative (pages 5-6) or read it out loud to the class. As students read (or listen), ask them to note how the writer introduces the subject and gives the necessary background information.

**ESL TIP** Read the sample narrative aloud to ESL students. Then have the class read it round-robin, and lastly have the students read it silently. Multiple readings will help students understand the story.
Reacting to the Narrative

- Have students complete “Reacting to the Reading” (page 7). You may ask them to respond on their own, in small groups, or as a class. When you discuss the activity, point out that narratives should consist of a series of actions. Students should include all the important actions related to their subjects when writing their own narratives.

Direct ESL students to the “Linking Words” chart (page 14). Ask them to reread the sample narrative (pages 5-6) and underline chronological linking words. Encourage them to use such words in their narratives.

- As a class, assess the sample using the rubric on page 8. For example, you could first analyze the ideas by determining if the narrative focuses on a specific experience, contains specific details, and so on. Then you could go on to organization, voice, etc. You could limit your analysis to one or two of the descriptors, or traits, on the rubric. Tell students that their own narratives will be assessed with the same rubric. Optional: Implement “Reading Narratives” (page 44). Provide books, magazines, and newspapers for students to review. Establish a due date. (Students can work on this activity throughout the unit whenever they have free time.)

DAY 3

Prewriting

Selecting a Subject

- Implement “Selecting a Subject” (page 10) in which students name three people who have been influential in their lives and then identify a memorable experience involving themselves and each individual they name.

Gathering Details

- Implement “Using the 5 Ws and H” (pages 11-12). If students complete page 12 (freewriting), ask them to underline ideas to include in their narratives.

Analyzing a Narrative

- Have students complete “Identifying Key Features in Narrative Writing” (page 13). Consider reading the excerpt out loud. If you feel students will have difficulty completing the main part of the activity on their own, complete it as a class.

Learning About the Narrative Structure

- Discuss the narrative graphic on page 14. The graphic illustrates how actions in a narrative are related. Inform students that narratives are typically organized chronologically (by time). Linking words like before, after, first, second, today, tomorrow, next, and later are used in narratives to connect the related actions.
DAY 4

Writing
Starting Your Narrative
- Implement “Starting Your Narrative” (pages 16-17). If students need another example, have them refer to the beginning of the sample narrative on page 5. Upon completion of the activity, ask for volunteers to share their openings for class discussion.

Developing the Middle Part
- Implement “Developing the Middle Part” (pages 18-20). Remind students that in this part of the narrative they should share the important actions related to their topic or experience. Before students begin their work, discuss the different ways to develop the main part of a narrative—including sensory details, using dialogue, adding personal thoughts and feelings, and using similes (when possible). Also identify examples of these features in the sample middle paragraphs on page 18 and on pages 5-6. Optional: In their own writing, have students label the features listed above.

DAY 5

Writing
Ending Your Narrative
- Implement “Ending Your Narrative” (page 21). Remind students that the ending should flow smoothly from the middle part of the narrative. Point out that some narratives end effectively after the last main action is stated.

Forming a Complete First Draft
- Completed copies of rough drafts are due for the next class period. Review the tips on page 22 with the students before they complete their first drafts. Remind students to store their first drafts in the back pocket of the unit booklets.

Explicitly instruct ESL students to write on every other line and on only one side of the paper. Also explicitly instruct them that the holes in loose-leaf paper go on the left. Some students are unfamiliar with the format of handwritten work in the United States.

Daily Lesson Plans: Week Two

DAY 1

Revising
Skills Activity
- Implement “Adding Personal Thoughts” (page 24) and “Adding Effective Details” (page 25). If you feel students will have difficulty completing page 25 on their own, complete it as a class. Upon completion of the second activity, ask for volunteers to share their rewrites. Discuss the effectiveness of the rewrites compared to the cliches in the original sentences.
Peer Responding

- Have students react to each other's writing using "Peer Responding" (page 26) as a guide.

   Read aloud the sample comments from the Teacher's Edition of the "Peer Responding" sheet (page 26). These examples will help ESL students feel more comfortable commenting on other students' writing.

Sharing Assessed Models

Optional: Share the assessed narratives (pages 10TE-13TE) to help students evaluate the effectiveness of their writing at this point. (Make copies of the narratives or display them on an overhead.)

DAY 2

Revising

Using a Checklist to Revise

- Have students revise their first drafts following "Using a Checklist" (top, page 27).
  Emphasize that revising is the process of improving the ideas, organization, and voice in writing. (Checking for spelling, punctuation, and grammar should wait.) Before students begin, review "Revising in Action" (bottom, page 27) to make sure that students understand the revising process.

Writing a Complete Revised Draft

- Provide time for students to complete their revising. Review with students the revising tips and the information about titles on page 28 before they write their revised drafts.

DAY 3

Editing and Proofreading

Skills Activity: Editing for Style

- Implement "Using Specific Verbs" (page 30). Ask students to find examples of specific verbs in the sample narrative (pages 5-6). You may let students work as partners.

Skills Activity: Editing for Correctness

- Implement "Punctuating Dialogue" (page 31) to help students as they use and punctuate dialogue in their own writing.

Inside Writing
Skills activities to consider:

Punctuating Dialogue (pages 18-19)
Apostrophes (pages 22-25)
Pronouns (pages 92-96)
Using Vivid Verbs (page 111)

DAY 4

Editing and Proofreading

Reviewing Editing in Action

- Discuss "Reviewing Editing in Action" (page 32).
Checking for Correctness

- Discuss the sample proofread paragraph at the top of page 33. Then implement “Making Editing and Proofreading Changes” (pages 33-34). This activity could be done by individuals, with partners, or as a class, depending on students’ abilities. Note that students may solve editing issues in different ways.

   ESL Tip
   Teach two or three types of errors for ESL students to look for in editing and proofreading. Afterward, look for the other errors as a group or class.

Using a Checklist to Edit and Proofread

- Have students edit their revised writing following “Using a Checklist” (page 35). Students may work in pairs on editing their narratives.

Writing the Final Copy

- Review the writing tips on page 36; then provide time for students to write and proofread their final copies (pages 37-40). Final copies are due on the next school day.

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DAY 5

Publishing

Sharing Final Copies

- Arrange students into small groups and have them share their final drafts. Provide copies of the rubric (page 8) for students to use to evaluate their classmates’ narratives. Each student responder should identify him- or herself (Responder’s name:) and the name of the writer (Writer’s name:) at the top of the rubric. Have students evaluate each narrative for the six traits listed on the rubric, and have them write at least one positive comment at the bottom of the rating sheet. (Each writer should have an opportunity to review his or her ratings.)

   Assessment Note: We use a 5-point scale to evaluate the writing samples on pages 107E-141E, but the rubric can be used with any point scale.

Understanding the Publishing Process

- Discuss the variety of ways writing can be published (page 42).

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Daily Lesson Plans: Week Three (Optional)

Extension Activities

Reflecting on Your Writing

- Have students complete “Reflecting on Your Writing” (page 45). This activity will help them think about their writing experience in this unit.

Preparing for a Writing Test

- Also consider implementing “Preparing for a Writing Test” (page 46). Students should review this sheet before they take a district or state assessment test.
About the Sample Narrative

The sample narrative on pages 5-6 is an excerpt from *A Call to Assembly*, an autobiography by Willie Ruff. In this excerpt, Ruff recalls a life-changing “chance encounter” with sign language when he was working at a shoe repair shop. Up to that point, the writer was consumed, to the point of distraction, with music and the sound of words. Learning about sign language helped him view the world from a new, silent perspective.

Prereading Activity

The subject of the narrative is a “chance encounter,” so spend some time exploring this concept before students read the sample. To get started, write the phrase on the board and ask for volunteers to offer their explanations. (Students should know that a chance encounter refers to “an unexpected or unplanned event occurring over a short period of time.”) Once students understand this concept, share with them a significant chance encounter that made an impression on you. (Perhaps you witnessed an accident that changed your attitude about seat belts.) Then ask for volunteers to share their own memorable chance encounters.

Important Stylistic Features

PLANNING THE BEGINNING: The sample shows one way to approach narrative writing. The writer introduces the subject and gives necessary background information before sharing the experience. The other basic way is to start right in the middle of the action, letting the story tell itself, so to speak. Inform students that they will have to choose the best approach for their own narratives. A caution with the first approach: Students shouldn’t give too much background information; it’s better to get into the actual experience as soon as possible.

DRAWING READERS INTO A NARRATIVE: The wording of the opening paragraph makes the sample narrative just about irresistible. Phrases such as “sucked me into its sphere” and “turned my impressionable ten-year-old mind completely upside down” draw readers right into the narrative: They have to find out what was so compelling about the experience. Remind your students to choose the words for their opening paragraphs with care.

Vocabulary

**sphere** Area of influence or importance

**Impressionable** Capable of being impressed or influenced

**Intoxicating** Exciting

**exotic** Mysteriously different

**mojo** Magical power

Author Bio

Willie Ruff is a jazz musician and teacher who grew up in rural Alabama. His autobiography, *A Call to Assembly*, explores the musical influences of his childhood. He has performed with many of the great jazz musicians, including Lionel Hampton and Miles Davis. He has also been a professor at Yale University.
Assessed Writing Samples

Pages 10TE-14TE include three sample narratives assessed using the rubric on page 8 in the unit. Use these samples to help students with their writing and revising. (See Week Two, Day 1 in “Daily Lesson Plans,” page 7TE.) A 5-point scale is used to evaluate these samples, but the rubric will work with any point scale. (These samples may also guide your own evaluation of students’ final work.)

Narrative Writing Assessment

EXCELLENT

The Game

The rain hit my helmet lightly, like a soft tapping on a door. I pulled my chin strap tightly around my face and snapped it on the other side. Forty-three teammates standing beside me started to jog, workhorses on the move, the clip-clop of our spikes the only sound.

As we approached the field, the rain picked up. I looked at my teammates after hearing the cheers from our fans. I said to myself, “This is why I play football; this is what it’s all about.” As we burst through the gate, the roar of the crowd engulfed us. Our coach gathered us together on the sidelines and barked the game plan to us. Forty-four sets of eyes locked on him as if we were hypnotized. We broke the huddle, and the receiving team trotted out onto the field.

The ball was kicked. It soared high above our heads as the two teams ran full charge at each other. I found my man and fixed on him like a missile locking on to its target. The return man was hit hard and brought down around the 50-yard line.

The crowd was yelling; the cheerleaders were pumped. I heard the chanting fade into the background as the game progressed. Two quarters passed, then three. Hard-hitting crunches and cracks could be heard play after play. Each team traded scores.

With less than a minute left in the game, we had a 24-17 lead. The rain was running down my helmet like an overflowing gutter. With time running out, the opposing quarterback dropped back. The crowd went silent as he passed to an open receiver in the end zone. Everything seemed to go into slow motion as the ball dropped securely into his hands. I stood openmouthed, dumbfounded, and barely breathing. They made the extra point, so the score was tied, which meant overtime.

The opposing team won the coin toss and went first. The official put the ball on the 10-yard line. In three short plays, they scored again, putting them ahead by 6. I felt like I was in a bad dream. After the extra point, it was our turn. Our first two plays were stopped cold by their tenacious defense. On
third down, our quarterback dropped back and connected with the tailback a yard short of the end zone. I snapped my helmet, anticipating heading out onto the field for the extra point.

Fourth down in overtime . . . this is the stuff dreams are made of. A quarterback sneak was our money play, a play we had executed to perfection at least 30 times throughout the season. How could it go wrong?

Eleven men broke the huddle and slowly walked to the line. The center placed his hands on the ball, keeping the laces up for luck. The quarterback barked his cadence like a general shouting orders. Eyes were locked; the crowd was silent. At the snap of the ball, their linemen charged us, trying to crack the wall. Our quarterback took a hit and fumbled before he could cross the line. The game was over. We lost by inches.

I went still and fell to my knees. Our quarterback sat in the end zone, alone. I could hear sobs from the crowd. Tears ran down my face, or maybe it was just the rain. I couldn’t tell. Some teammates were consoled by their families or hugged by their friends. Our last game was not supposed to end in this way.

Heads down, our team walked slowly back to the locker room, the once thunderous footsteps now silent. For the first time that night, I felt the cold.
It’s a Boy!

My Child Development teacher handed me the ten-pound bundle. It had come at last: my turn to take the Think-About-It baby home for a night to check out parenthood, sort of. This baby had a computer inside it’s body that was programmed to make crying sounds at any given moment and I was the only person who could stop the crying because I had the key. This key was tied to my wrist and could be inserted in the dolls’ back to stop the thing from crying.

It was a Friday night when my turn came to take the ten pound plastic doll home. It actually looked like a live baby from a distance. Even had a pleasant baby powder smell. After I took the baby home in its car seat, I changed him into some really cute clothes because my friends and I were gonna go out that night and I decided to name him Tyler, too. So far, so good. The doll hadn’t cried which was lucky.

My friends came over and we all piled into the car and it was kind of squished because we had the baby’s seat, too. I had to treat the doll like a real baby because the computer inside also measured any types of abuse to the doll such as shaking or neglect. The hour-long drive to our destination went pretty smooth until we got to the restaurant. Of course it was a Friday night so there were a lot of people waiting in line to get a table and it was kind of cold so I decided to wrap Tyler in a blanket and carry him in that way. I also had a diaper bag with diapers, a bottle, and an extra set of clothes hanging on my arm.

When I walked into that crowded entryway, I got some very weird looks and could see quite a few raised eyebrows in my direction and my friends also noticed some glares and stares. One couple says, “why would she bring a baby here?” People were giving me rude looks and forming judgements about me. Others just smiled at me. I think they felt sorry for me.

We finally got a table and the waiter, he asked me if I needed a highchair or something. I told him it was just a doll, but a highchair would be good. He thought it was funny and brought a highchair and even a red balloon for “the little one.”

Again during our meal my friends and I received strange looks and stuff from the other people. One couple kept walking by our table just to get a look at my baby. As the couple walked by, my friends and I started discussing how people were being towards us because they thought I was the mother. We decided that we would probably do the same if we saw a teenage girl coming in with a baby and a group of friends. Teenage pregnancy is not excepted where I live and is definitely not the norm so many girls would for sure hide there pregnancy if they decided to keep the baby.
We went to the mall after we were finished eating and I had to take Tyler with me. My friends were looking at clothes but I couldn’t because I was carrying this baby (which was getting heavy) so I just roamed around wishing I could try on clothes too and then the baby started to cry this horrible imitation of a real baby’s cry. It was so loud and really really terrible so I quickly put the key into the doll’s back so it would quit crying. I had to explain to the dumb sales clerk why I was carrying around a plastic doll and I was so glad to finally go home.

I guess I learned a lot with the Think-About-It baby since the doll definitely told me that I was not ready to be a parent, but it also made me understand how other people react. People do not realize that some things are not the way they seem. The doll seemed like it was my baby, but that was not the case because I was only carrying it around for a stupid class project.

I sometimes catch myself judging people I do not know, just because of the first impression they give, and in reality, I do not have a clue about there real story. I especially think people judge teenage girls with babies too quickly. Sure, they may have made a mistake, but the girl usually knows that and is the one who has to pay the price. I only experienced the glares and rude comments one night, but I thought of all the girls who have to deal with these looks wherever they go so we shouldn’t judge these girls as well as everyone else and realize that some things are not the way they seem.

**Assessment Rubric**

1. **Stimulating Ideas**
   - The narrative...
     - focuses on a specific experience or event.
     - contains specific details and dialogue.
     - makes readers want to know what happens next.

2. **Logical Organization**
   - includes a clear beginning that pulls readers into the narrative.
   - presents ideas in an organized manner.

3. **Engaging Voice**
   - speaks knowledgeably and enthusiastically.
   - shows that the writer is truly interested in the subject.

4. **Original Word Choice**
   - contains specific nouns and verbs and colorful modifiers.

5. **Effective Sentence Style**
   - flows smoothly from one idea to the next.

6. **Correct, Accurate Copy**
   - observes the basic rules of writing.
   - follows the form suggested by the teacher.

**Comments:**

This experience was a good choice for a personal essay. You provide an interesting picture of your night with Tyler. You do, however, get off the topic of teenage parenthood.

In addition, your sentence style needs attention. Fixing the rambling sentences would make your narrative easier to read. Eliminate unnecessary, negative words (“dumb,” “stupid”) and ask someone to help you check for spelling and other errors.
My Brother's Wedding

One day this past summer I was in my brothers wedding. It was a small wedding because it was a little church in our town, so they couldn't invite many people. On Saturday morning, I woke up early and ate breakfast as usual. My mom didn't like the way I combed my hair over, and she kept trying to change it. I had to get dressed in my tux after we got to the church.

Listening to the music in the church made me start to get a little nervous, but I'll bet the groom was even worse. The bride looked pretty. My brother Jon looked pretty nervous too when she came down the isle he was looking at the minister and then at the bride the whole time. My mom cried the most, because Jon is the oldest she's going to miss him when he moves out.

Finally we were at the reception, my favorite part of a wedding. Because I like to eat. I also like dancing. There wasn't many girls their around my age, so I ended up dancing just one slow dance with my new sister-in-law, the bride. I danced all the fast songs. The DJ was great. Before I knew it, they were getting ready to throw the garter. I tried to catch it, but this other groomsmen got in front of me and won. Then they left on their honeymoon, I think they went to a resort in Florida somewhere. The wedding cake ran out otherwise the day was great. I'll always remember being in the wedding.

Assessment Rubric

2. STIMULATING IDEAS
   The narrative...
   • focuses on a specific experience or event.
   • contains specific details and dialogue.
   • makes readers want to know what happens next.

3. LOGICAL ORGANIZATION
   • includes a clear beginning that pulls readers into the narrative.
   • presents ideas in an organized manner.

3. ENGAGING VOICE
   • speaks knowledgeably and/or enthusiastically.
   • shows that the writer is truly interested in the subject.

2. ORIGINAL WORD CHOICE
   • contains specific nouns and verbs and colorful modifiers.

2. EFFECTIVE SENTENCE STYLE
   • flows smoothly from one idea to the next.

2. CORRECT, ACCURATE COPY
   • observes the basic rules of writing.
   • follows the form suggested by the teacher.

COMMENTS:

You picked a good topic for a narrative. Focusing on one part of the wedding, perhaps the reception, would have been more effective. You could have told us about the food, the music, the people you mingled with, and so on. It would also be interesting to know how you felt personally about being in this wedding.

Make sure to have a trusted editor help you check your writing. Your narrative contains many sentence errors.
Optional Activities for Multiple Intelligences

Consider implementing one or more of the following activities during the unit. (The intelligences addressed in each activity are listed in italics.)

**Warm-Up** (page 4)
Make a list of your favorite and least favorite experiences. How many positive experiences did you list? How many negative ones did you list? Consider why these experiences left an impression in your mind.
*Logical-Mathematical Intelligence*

**Reacting to the Reading** (page 7)
Willie Ruff calls his memorable experience a “chance encounter.” Share chance encounters with a classmate. Is each story interesting and engaging? How so?
*Intrapersonal Intelligence*

**Prewriting** (page 10)
On your own paper, write three possible topics for your narrative. Then discuss these topics with a classmate. Determine together which topic would work best for this assignment.
*Interpersonal Intelligence*

**Editing** (pages 32-34)
Enhance your story by including a picture that depicts the theme of your story.
*Spatial-Visual Intelligence*

**Publishing** (page 42)
Turn your story into a script; then enlist classmates to perform it. Eventually, videotape a performance.
*Verbal and Kinesthetic Intelligence*

**Reflecting on Your Writing** (page 45)
Create a rap poem or song focusing on the main theme in your story.
*Musical Intelligence*

Additional Narrative Writing Prompts
For additional writing practice, assign one or more of the following narrative writing prompts.

- Share a planned event (a game, concert, family get-together, and so on) that changed your life in an important way.
- Recall a time when you acted very responsibly.
- Share your most memorable music-related experience.
- Recall an experience in which language played a key role.
- Suppose you are an important, or a not-so-important, historical figure. Share one of your most memorable childhood experiences.
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<tr>
<th>Inside Writing</th>
<th>Writers INC ©2001</th>
<th>Write Ahead ©2004</th>
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<td>33 Checking for Correctness</td>
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<td><strong>PUBLISHING: Sharing the Final Copy</strong></td>
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Extension Activities
44 Reading Narratives
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Checklist: **Narrative Writing**

This checklist will help you keep track of the assignments in this unit. Check the box next to each unit assignment as you complete it.

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- [ ] Narrative Warm-Up: Sharing Personal Stories (page 4)
- [ ] Reacting to the Reading (page 7)

**PREWRITING:** Planning Your Writing

- [ ] Selecting a Subject (page 10)
- [ ] Using the 5 W's and H (pages 11-12)
- [ ] Identifying Key Features in Narrative Writing (page 13)

**WRITING:** Connecting Your Ideas

- [ ] Starting Your Narrative (pages 16-17)
- [ ] Developing the Middle Part (pages 18-20)
- [ ] Ending Your Narrative (page 21)
- [ ] Forming a Complete First Draft (page 22)

**REVISING:** Improving Your Writing

- [ ] Adding Personal Thoughts (page 24)
- [ ] Adding Effective Details (page 25)
- [ ] Peer Responding (page 26)
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- [ ] Writing a Complete Revised Draft (page 28)

**EDITING:** Checking for Style and Correctness

- [ ] Using Specific Verbs (page 30)
- [ ] Punctuating Dialogue (page 31)
- [ ] Checking for Correctness (pages 33-34)
- [ ] Using a Checklist (page 35)
- [ ] Writing the Final Copy (pages 36-40)

**Extension Activities**

- [ ] Reading Narratives (page 44)
- [ ] Reflecting on Your Writing (page 45)
- [ ] Preparing for a Writing Test (page 46)
"I like to write as though my readers are without television, radio, movies, or anything else."

—Joyce Carol Thomas

Narratives

To *narrate* means “to share or tell a story.” When you write a personal narrative, you share a story about a specific experience in your life. In this unit, you will be asked to write about an experience that changed you in some way, that opened up your mind to a new way of thinking.

An effective personal narrative helps a reader see, hear, and feel an experience. Picture yourself sitting next to a friend who is telling you a great story. You are on the edge of your seat, waiting to hear what happens next. That is how your personal narrative should make readers feel. It should hold their attention from start to finish.

*Remember:* The most important stories, and the best stories, are your own. You make sense out of your life by reflecting on your personal stories, and you create your special place in the world by sharing them.
Narrative Warm-Up: Sharing Personal Stories

Your personal world is made up of stories related to home life, school life, life in your neighborhood, and so on. If you take time to think about the different parts of your life, you will discover that you have many stories to tell.

Think back to one of your early years in school. Then, in the space below, write freely for 5-10 minutes about that year. If you run out of room, finish your writing on your own paper.

My most vivid memory from ____ grade is . . .

________________________________________________________________________

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Next Step: Talk with a classmate (or in a small group) about one specific event in your freewriting. Make sure to include all of the important details in your sharing.
Reading a Sample Narrative

In this sample, writer Willie Ruff recalls a special moment when he was introduced to a language that turned his “ten-year-old mind completely upside down.” As you read this sample, think of events in your own life that changed you or introduced you to something new.

From A Call to Assembly

I had a chance encounter with an altogether different kind of language, full of another kind of color, and it sucked me into its sphere and turned my impressionable ten-year-old mind completely upside down: It was sign language—talking with hands—the language of the deaf.

It happened when I went to work in a shoe repair shop, replacing a young black man who’d decided to go on to better things. This was a job that Mama Minnie [Ruff’s grandmother] was enthusiastic about, because it was an opportunity to learn a good trade while earning a little coin. The work was not hard to learn, and Mr. Steele, the owner, was a good teacher even though he could be touchy and sharp. . . .

One day a man came into the shop and started rattling off talk on his hands with Mr. Steele. I was amazed that the boss could give it right back to this deaf fellow. Such expressive agility in this big shoemaker’s dirty fingers made me wonder. He looked perfectly at home signing and even laughed out

VOCABULARY

sphere Area of influence or importance
impressionable Capable of being impressed or influenced
loud a couple of times with the deaf man before he left. Then I asked Mr. Steele, "Where did you learn to talk on your hands?"

"I was raised and taught my trade by my older brother," he said. "He was deaf, and he taught me shoemaking and the sign language. It ain't hard."

After that, I kind of regarded the boss as a man of some mysterious inner substance, for I'd never heard or seen a real conversation in a foreign language before. This shoemaker speaking that silent secret code was an intoxicating, exotic curiosity: "A white man with a language mojo," I told myself.

**VOCABULARY**

- **intoxicating**: Exciting
- **exotic**: Mysteriously different
- **mojo**: Magical power

Reacting to the Reading

Respond to the sample narrative by answering the following questions.

1. In the first sentence, the writer says that he had a “chance encounter.” What is it that he encountered or experienced?
   
   He had a chance encounter with two men using sign language.

2. What background information is given in the second paragraph?
   
   The writer experiences the new language while working at a shoe repair shop. Mr. Steele was the owner of the shop.

3. The writer of this narrative is a jazz musician. What phrases or ideas in the sample sound jazzy or hip? List two or three.
   
   “sucked me into its sphere,” “earning a little coin,”
   “rattling off talk on his hands,” “give it right back,” “silent secret code,” “a white man with a language mojo”

4. Why was this experience so important or memorable to the writer?
   
   The writer had never heard or seen a real conversation in a foreign language before. After that, he regarded his boss in a new, perhaps more respectful way.
Evaluating:
Understanding the Traits of an Effective Narrative

The rubric (checklist) below will help you understand the traits found in effective narratives. Use this rubric to help you develop your narrative and as a final checklist for your completed writing. You can also use this rubric to evaluate other narratives. (Your teacher will give you a point scale to use for final evaluations.)

Assessment Rubric

___ STIMULATING IDEAS

_The narrative_

- focuses on a specific experience or event.
- contains specific details and dialogue.
- makes readers want to know what happens next.

___ LOGICAL ORGANIZATION

- includes a clear beginning that pulls readers into the narrative.
- presents ideas in an organized manner.

___ ENGAGING VOICE

- speaks knowledgeably and/or enthusiastically.
- shows that the writer is truly interested in the subject.

___ ORIGINAL WORD CHOICE

- contains specific nouns and verbs and colorful modifiers.

___ EFFECTIVE SENTENCE STYLE

- flows smoothly from one idea to the next.

___ CORRECT, ACCURATE COPY

- observes the basic rules of writing.
- follows the form suggested by the teacher.

Comments:
Planning Your Writing

Prewriting

Narratives
Prewriting  Selecting a Subject

To get started, you will need to select an experience that you would like to share. To identify possible topics, follow the directions below.

Name three people who have influenced the way that you think and act. Think of family members, neighbors, classmates, teammates, and fellow workers. Write the names in the blanks below. Write about a memorable experience involving you and each person that you have named. Think of experiences that taught you something or changed your thinking in some way.

Person #1: ...........................................................................................................

Memorable experience:

Person #2: ...........................................................................................................

Memorable experience:

Person #3: ...........................................................................................................

Memorable experience:

Put a star (*) next to the experience that you would like to write about. Explain the reason for your choice below.

...........................................................................................................................

...........................................................................................................................

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...........................................................................................................................
**Prewriting: Using the 5 W’s and H**

Use the chart below to answer the 5 W’s and H (who? what? when? where? why? and how?) about your topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHO</strong></th>
<th>was involved in the experience?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT</strong></th>
<th>exactly happened? (the actions or events)</th>
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<th><strong>WHEN</strong></th>
<th>did it happen?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHERE</strong></th>
<th>did it happen?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHY</strong></th>
<th>did it happen? (the background)</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOW</strong></th>
<th>did you change because of the experience?</th>
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**Next Step:** To collect more details, talk about the experience with a classmate or write freely about it. Use the next page for recording notes or freewriting.
Prewriting Identifying Key Features in Narrative Writing

Effective narratives answer the 5 W’s and H, but they also contain features that help make the writing come alive for the reader. These features include, among other things, personal thoughts, sensory details, and similes.

- **Personal thoughts** reveal the writer’s feelings and insights.
- **Sensory details** tell how something looks, sounds, smells, and so on.
- **Similes** compare two things using the word “like” or “as.”

Read the following excerpt from a personal narrative. Then, on the lines below, identify at least one example of each special feature explained on this page.

The cinder block walls of the living room were cold and unfriendly, and to a homesick 12-year-old girl, they held no promise of a holiday celebration. The little green tree stood in the corner like a small student being punished for some childish mischief. Quietly, I tiptoed into the room, my eyes darting like two water bugs searching the darkness for the lizards who would bed down here for the night. It would be a strange, silent Christmas in this poor village in Honduras—far from my home in New York. Slowly, I took the electrical cord and inserted the plug. A thousand brilliant jewels danced upon the tree, and from the darkness beyond the windows, a muffled gasp broke the silence. I looked out and found that I was not alone, for hand in hand around the living room windows stood the villagers, wonder and delight in their weary eyes.

**Personal thoughts:** walls of the living room were cold and unfriendly, and to a homesick 12-year-old girl, they held no promise of a holiday celebration

**Sensory details:** silent Christmas, a thousand brilliant jewels danced upon the tree, a muffled gasp broke the silence

**Similes:** the little green tree stood in the corner like a small student being punished for some childish mischief, my eyes darting like two water bugs

**Next Step:** Share your responses with a classmate. Did each of you identify the same examples? Remember to use these features in your own narrative.
Your narrative is the story of an important experience in your life. It highlights an event that happened to you and taught you something. The graphic below shows how the parts of a narrative fit together.

- **The beginning** identifies your subject and gives background information. (See page 16.)
- **The middle** tells about the important experience and shares the most important details of this event. (See page 18.)
- **The ending** sums up the importance of this experience in your life—what you learned about yourself, others, or the world. (See page 21.)

**Transition Words and Phrases**

Narratives are almost always organized **chronologically** (by time). Words and phrases like *first, next, and as soon as* are used in narratives to link or connect the related actions. Here is a list of linking words that show time.

- **about**
- **after**
- **at**
- **before**
- **during**
- **first**
- **second**
- **third**
- **yesterday**
- **meanwhile**
- **today**
- **tomorrow**
- **until**
- **next**
- **soon**
- **later**
- **finally**
- **then**
- **as soon as**
- **when**
Writing
Connecting Your Ideas

Prewriting
Writing
Revising
Editing
Publishing

Narratives 15
Writing Starting Your Narrative

The beginning part of your narrative should gain your reader’s interest. Here are four ideas for writing an effective beginning:

1. Make something happen right away.
2. Introduce the main characters and get them talking.
3. Give background information.
4. Begin with a thoughtful question or a surprising statement.

In the beginning of the sample narrative below, the writer gives background information to get readers interested in the experience.

Sample Beginning Paragraph

The second semester of eighth grade was a confusing time for me. Friends, parties, and boys suddenly exploded into my life, and studying made its exit. Yes, my grades fell. My teachers would raise their eyebrows at me, ask me what was wrong, and shake their heads. But Mr. Dehnke surprised me.

Use the space below to write the beginning of your narrative. If you don’t like how it turns out, write another version or two on the next page. (Review the list at the top of the page, and try using a different strategy for each beginning.)
Writing Developing the Middle Part

In the middle part of your narrative, share all the important details about the experience. (Make sure that you answer the 5 W's and H from page 11.) Here are four reminders for developing this part:

1. Add your personal thoughts and feelings.
2. Include plenty of specific sensory details that help readers see, hear, and feel the experience.
3. Use similes to make ideas clearer and more interesting.
4. Add dialogue (written conversation). Let the characters tell the story through their talking.

Study the middle paragraphs below and in the narrative on pages 5-6.

Sample Middle Paragraphs

It was midsemester; time for teacher-student conferences and progress reports. I dreaded the entire process. My reports were all the same—“not performing well,” “grades dropping,” “work unfinished.”

In history class, Mr. Dehnke talked to each student separately, quietly, while the rest of the class did busy work. He called my name—“Rachel, please”—and I dragged myself to the conference station, near the windows, where I could see the park and a few runners through the bare trees. Under my breath I pleaded, please let me be beamed into Island Park. Then, before I could stop my lips from moving, I asked Mr. D., “Are you going to yell at me like everyone else?” He just smiled and closed his grade book.

“Actually,” he said, “I wanted to tell you how much I admire your intelligence.”

“What?”

“Yes, I wish I had the brain you have. Truly. You’re an excellent thinker. You can figure things out, and I’m impressed. You may return to your desk now.” I was stunned. “You may take your seat,” Mr. Dehnke repeated. Well, okay then. I’ll just go sit down, but what kind of conference was that? What’s this business about my thinking ability? That gave me something to think about.

Write your middle paragraphs below and on the next two pages.
Writing

Ending Your Narrative

Your narrative may end naturally after you have included the final detail about your experience. However, if you feel something more is needed, try one or more of these ideas:

1. Add a final idea or two to make sure that readers understand everything.
2. Explain what you learned from the experience, or how it changed you.
3. Connect your experience to life in general.

In the final paragraph of the sample narrative below, the writer explains how her experience changed her attitude about herself and her actions.

Sample Ending Paragraph

Over the next few weeks, Mr. Dehnke's message kept coming back to me, and it began to soak in. I had missed thinking in my classes, participating in discussions, and working on projects. I had missed learning "stupid" history facts and getting good grades. I finally figured it out: I wanted to be me again; I didn't have to give up using my brain for anyone or anything. Mr. Dehnke "told me" that during our conference. He helped me to rescue my grades . . . and my pride.

Use the space below to write the ending of your narrative. If you don't like the first ending, try another version.
After you finish pages 16-21, write a complete copy of your first draft. Do your writing on your own paper, and store your work in the back pocket of this booklet. Keep the following tips in mind as you complete this copy.

**Drafting Tips**

1. **Write on every other line and on only one side of your paper.** This will make revising much easier. (If you use a computer, make sure to double-space.)

2. **Keep your writing as neat as possible,** but don’t stop to recopy just to make your draft look better. Concentrate on ideas, not neatness.

3. **Keep your purpose and audience in mind.** Your purpose is to share a story that changed you in some way or opened your mind to a new way of thinking.

4. **Feel free to add new ideas that come to mind as you write your draft.** After all, writing is a process of discovery.

5. **Notice any parts you may want to change.** You can make these changes when you revise.

6. **Remember: A first draft is your first look at a piece of writing.** You may rewrite some parts of your draft three or four times before they sound just right.
Revising
Improving
Your Writing

Prewriting
Writing
Revising
Editing
Publishing
Adding Personal Thoughts

The activity on page 18 lists some of the ways to develop the main part of your essay. One of the ways—adding your personal thoughts or feelings—can make a narrative more interesting and complete. The writer of the sample narrative (pages 5-6) added his personal thoughts (in *italics* below) in one of the middle paragraphs.

One day a man came into the shop and started rattling off talk on his hands with Mr. Steele. *I was amazed that the boss could give it right back to this deaf fellow.*

Circle the personal feelings in each of the narrative passages below. The first one has been done for you.

1. We laughed, and it was then that I felt it. Sitting in drenched clothes, at 7:30 p.m., on a roller coaster, with trees swaying in the breeze, I felt the strong bond between my father and me. I’m sure he felt it, too, as we climbed out of the train.

2. We placed all of our baggage on top of the van and headed for the airport. I was the last one in the car. As we moved farther along, I could see my home fading away. And in that moment, I felt a part of me would always be there.

3. I called my dad. During our conversation, for the first time since I was four years old, I heard him say, “I love you.” My family may be scattered over three states, but knowing that everyone is out there is the best feeling in the world. It makes me feel like a hole in my heart has been filled.

4. For the past three years, I have spoken to the school’s child-development class. I share my struggles in order to make others more sensitive to those who are different. My disabilities only “disable” me in the physical sense. They have strengthened my mind and my spirit. I will never be ashamed of my feet or my knee, for they have guided me in the past and will lead me into the future.

**Next Step:** Find one part in your narrative where you could add a personal feeling or thought. Write down this feeling or thought in the space below. If you like how this new idea sounds, add it to your narrative. Then look for other parts that could use this personal touch.
Revising Adding Effective Details

While you review your first draft, you may come across a passage or two that seem especially dull. Study the passage carefully because it may contain a cliche. A cliche is a phrase or sentence that has been used so much that it sounds boring or uninteresting.

*Cliche:* Her face was as red as a beet.

*Better:* Her face turned a rosy pink and then a deep red.

Underline the cliche in each of the following sentences.

1. I thought Earth Day would be boring, but a good time was had by all.

2. When I saw the look on my mother’s face, I knew I was up a creek.

3. My grandma has a heart of gold.

4. Coach Williams almost blew a gasket in the locker room during halftime.

5. Mom says that Dad’s clothes show that he is over the hill.

Rewrite three of the sentences above so that they no longer contain cliches. Replace the cliches with more interesting, original details. *Answers will vary.*

1. *I thought Earth Day would be boring, but every one of the hands-on science activities taught us something new.*

2. *When I saw the look on my mother’s face, I knew I was going to be grounded.*

3. *My grandma has a heart as warm and comforting as just-baked chocolate-chip cookies.*

Other Common Cliches

busy as a bee  in a nutshell  face the music
once in a lifetime  in the nick of time  raining cats and dogs
don’t rock the boat  quiet enough to hear a pin drop

Next Step: Compare your sentences with a classmate’s. Did you find effective ways to reword the sentences so that they no longer contain cliches? Then check your first draft for cliches and rewrite sentences to eliminate any cliches that you find.
Peer Responding

Your teacher may want you to react to a classmate’s story by completing the response sheet below.

Response Sheet

Writer’s name: ........................................ Responder’s name: ........................................

Title: ........................................................................................................................................

I liked . . .

- the beginning of the narrative. It intrigued me.
- the specific details. They helped me “see” the experience.
- your writing voice. You sound really interested in the subject.
- one part in particular because . . .
- how creatively you express your ideas.
- the ending because it shows what you learned from the experience.

I would change . . .

- the middle to tell more about . . .
- the way you explain things near the ending.
- the ____________ sentence because it is unclear.

Strong words, phrases, and ideas in the writing . . .

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Narratives
Revising Using a Checklist

Use the following checklist or the assessment rubric on page 8 to help you review and revise your first draft. Make as many changes in your draft as needed so that your narrative contains the best ideas and details.

Revising Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will my beginning grab the reader’s interest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does my writing include all of the important actions related to the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I include personal thoughts or feelings, sensory details, and dialogue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I sound truly interested in the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does my narrative end effectively?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revising in Action

When you revise, you improve the ideas and organization in your first draft. You can make improvements by adding new ideas, crossing out unnecessary ideas, rewriting unclear ideas, and reordering out-of-place ideas. See the examples below.

An unnecessary idea is crossed out.

This was it. There was no turning back. This was really it. As the well-greased wheels pulled slowly up the track, my grip on the steel bar across my lap tightened. I heard shrill screams of excitement from the people in the front row. The train groaned to a halt, halfway up the hill, just far enough for me to see the water rushing down like a powerful natural waterfall.

A personal thought is added.

Don’t scream, I said to myself.

An idea is made clearer and more interesting.

My father glanced over at me from my right. He was the one that shows off a smiley face’s wide grin wearing his favorite shirt. His smile matched his shirt.

“Ready?”
Revising Writing a Complete Revised Draft

After you finish pages 24-27, write a complete copy of your revised first draft. Do your writing on your own paper, and store your work in the back pocket of this booklet. Keep the following tips in mind as you complete the revised copy.

Revising Tips

1. Write on every other line and on only one side of your paper. This will make editing much easier. (If you use a computer, make sure to double-space.)

2. Keep your writing as neat as possible, but don’t worry if you cross out a few words.

3. Focus on ideas that need to be changed. Add, cut, reorder, and rewrite different parts as needed.

4. Take your time. You can’t make all your changes at once.

5. Pay special attention to peer responses. Your peers may notice ideas that need to be clearer.

6. Save your first draft and your revision so you have a record of the changes you’ve made.

Adding a Title

At some point in the process, you need to add a title. The narrative title should hook your reader and help introduce your story. Here are three guidelines to follow:

- Use strong, colorful words.
  The 500-Foot Behemoth, not My Roller Coaster Ride

- Give the words rhythm.
  Mr. Dehneke Didn’t Yell, not My Teacher’s Conference

- Be imaginative.
  Light in My Darkness, not A Holiday Away from Home
Editing
Checking for Style and Correctness
Using Specific Verbs

Sentences like “Our team went through the gate” and “The roar of the crowd met us” are too general. A reader can’t see how the team moved or feel the effect of the crowd’s roar. On the other hand, sentences like “Our team *burst* through the gate” and “The roar of the crowd *engulfed* us” are much more specific. The action verbs “burst” and “engulfed” make the ideas clear to the reader.

Write two specific synonyms for each of the general verbs listed below. *(Synonyms are words that have the same meaning.)* The first one has been done for you. *Answers will vary.*

1. run  
2. laugh  
3. talk  
4. eat  
5. walk  
6. look  
7. clean  

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**1. run**  
**2. laugh**  
**3. talk**  
**4. eat**  
**5. walk**  
**6. look**  
**7. clean**

---

In the space below, write interesting sentences for any three of the specific verbs that you have listed above.

1. **On the very first play, Marcus sprinted into the end zone.**

2. **My mom chats with her sister for hours at a time.**

3. **Todd gobbles popcorn by the handful.**

**Next Step:** Share your specific verbs and sentences with a partner or a small group of students. Then check the verbs in your revised narrative. Change those that could be more specific and action packed.
Punctuating Dialogue

Dialogue (written conversation) helps you to re-create an experience rather than to just tell what happened. Use the examples that follow as a guide for punctuating dialogue.

- Ferrin asked, "What's for lunch today?"
  (A comma separates the spoken words from the rest of the sentence. The speaker's actual words are put in quotation marks.)
- "I'm not sure," said Katrice. "It might be spaghetti casserole again."
  (A period comes after "Katrice" because that's the end of a complete sentence.)
- "Oh, man," said Jamell, "I hate casseroles! I'd rather have pizza."
  (A comma comes after "Jamell" because what follows completes the sentence.)
- "Should we get the salad bar?" Katrice asked.
  (The question mark is placed inside the quotation marks because the quotation is a question.)

Punctuate the following dialogue with quotation marks, commas, and end marks. The first one has been done for you.


2. "Well said Kenny, he broke the color barrier in baseball."

3. Michael exclaimed. "Everyone knows that!"

4. "Okay, how about this?" said Kenny. "He was a four-sports star at UCLA, and he was known for his daring style of play."

5. Marius added. "He excelled at stealing home plate, the most risky play in baseball."

6. "About how long did he play?" asked Michael.

7. "Kenny said. "He played for the Dodgers for about 10 years, starting in the late 1940s."

Next Step: Check the dialogue in your narrative for correct punctuation, capitalization, and format. Remember to start a new paragraph whenever someone new talks.
Editing | Reviewing Editing in Action

Your main job when editing is to check your revised writing for word choice, style, and sentence errors. See the examples below.

A more specific verb is used.

"Even if I wasn't," I answered humorously, "do I have a choice now?"

"Don't forget to smile for the camera when we hit the drop," my father said, reminding me of the tradition of taking pictures of the screaming riders.

A wordy phrase is replaced.

My thoughts were interrupted as the train jerked forward, racing us against the wind. It seemed to be only a few seconds

A run-on sentence is corrected.

the water at the bottom of the drop covered us like a blanket.

Editing and Proofreading Symbols

Use the following marks to show where and how your writing needs to be changed.

Symbol | Meaning | Example
--- | --- | ---
| Capitalize a letter. | Lorraine Hansberry wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*. |
| Lowercase a letter. | Her play tells the story of the Younger Family. |
| Insert a period. | This play focuses on racial attitudes. It also . . . |
| Correct spelling. | Lena Younger, the family leader, is very religious. |
| Delete or replace. | Lena she makes a down payment on a nice house. |
| Insert a comma. | Her son, Walter Lee, Jr., wants to buy a business. |
| Insert an apostrophe or quotation marks. | Walter Lees wife hopes for a larger apartment. |
| Insert a question mark or an exclamation point. | What would Beneatha do with the money? |
| Start a new paragraph. | The play takes a surprising turn when . . . |
| Switch words or letters. | Walter gets the possible worst news. |
Proofreading Checking for Correctness

When you proofread, you check the final copy of your writing for errors in usage, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling. (Use the editing and proofreading symbols on page 32 to mark your changes.) See the examples below.

Punctuation of dialogue is corrected.

A spelling error is corrected.

An incorrect pronoun is changed.

A usage error is corrected.

When we had finally caught our breath, my father
and I exclaimed together, "That was great! Let's go
again? We laughed, and it was then that I felt it. Sitting in
drenched clothes, at 7:30 p.m., on a roller coaster, with trees
swaying in the breeze, I felt the strong bond between my
father and I. I'm sure he felt it, too, as we climbed out
of the train.

Making Editing and Proofreading Changes

Edit and proofread the following narrative to improve its style and correctness. (Use the editing and proofreading symbols listed on page 32.) The first correction has been done for you. Check off the errors as you correct them.

☐ spelling errors (2) ☐ errors punctuating dialogue (3) ☐ comma splices (2)
☐ usage errors (4) ☐ capitalization errors (3) ☐ verbs that could be more specific (at least 3) Specific verb changes will vary.

The Superhero with the Flu

1 I felt rotten. It was a cold, rainy spring break, and I had the flu. Hoping

2 the pacific would raise my mood, I walked down from the hotel to the beach.

3 Everything was gray. The clouds looked like a ripped-up blanket, and the sea

4 churned like a huge washing machine. gulls squabbled over dead fish.

5 Climbing out on the boulders, I sat down just above a woman who was
fishing and wondered why I'd even gotten up that morning.

A wave moved along the jetty. I watched it come, mounding on the rocks.

Great, I thought, now I'll be soaked and sick. The water went on the

boulders just a few feet away from me but flooded over the woman. She

yelped and vanished. The wave went back out into the harbor, taking her

along with it. She came up gasping. Her life belt kept her afloat, but she was

pounded by the braking waves.

"She doesn't know how to swim," said a nearby man. He dived in after

the woman and stroked through the heavy surf. When he got close, she

grabbed him, and then they both were in trouble.

As I walked toward them over the rocks, Coach Anderson's voice echoed

in my head. "Reach ... throw ... row ... go! Never go in the water unless

there's no other choice. Even then, take something that floats."

I lifted a big piece of driftwood and chucked it into the water. The wood

sank in the tossing brine and then bobbed back up.

I jumped in, grabbed the driftwood, and swam toward the man and

woman. Their lips were turning blue, but they seemed to think I was a

superhero. We held onto the wood while others threw us a rope.

Back on shore, the day looked the same, but everything had changed. At

that point I realized it didn't matter what the day brought to me, but what I

brought to the day.

Next Step: Carefully read and mark your revised narrative for any editing and proof-reading changes. Then prepare your final copy.
Editing and Proofreading: **Using a Checklist**

Use the checklist that follows to check your revised writing for style and correctness. Remember, this step is important only after you have revised the ideas in your narrative.

*It's very easy to miss errors when you edit and proofread; so make sure to ask a teacher, a classmate, or a family member for help.*

**Sentence Structure**
- Did I write clear and complete sentences?
- Did I write interesting sentences?
- Do my sentences contain personal thoughts and effective details? (pages 24-25)

**Punctuation**
- Does each sentence have end punctuation?
- Did I punctuate dialogue correctly? (page 31)

**Capitalization**
- Did I start all of my sentences with capital letters?
- Did I capitalize the names of people and places?

**Grammar**
- Did I use the correct form of verbs (*give, gave, given*)?
- Did I use subjects and verbs that agree in number? (*Musicians perform; Laura dances.*)

**Usage**
- Did I choose the right word (*your*/*you're*)?
- Did I use specific verbs? (page 30)

**Spelling**
- Did I check for spelling errors?
- Did I use a dictionary or the spell checker on my computer?
Tips for Handwritten Final Copies

- Use your best penmanship.
- Write in blue or black ink.
- Write your name, your teacher’s name, the class, and the date in the upper left-hand corner of page 1.
- Skip a line, and center the title on the next line.
- Skip a line, and start your writing.
- Indent the first line of each new paragraph.
- Write your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner of every page after page 1.
- Maintain a one-inch margin around each page.

Tips for Computer-Generated Final Copies

- Use an easy-to-read font.
- Use a 10- or 12-point type size.
- Double-space throughout your writing.
- Maintain a one-inch margin around each page.

After you complete pages 30-35, write a neat final copy of your narrative on pages 37-40. Then proofread your copy for errors. Keep the following tips in mind.
Publishing
Sharing the Final Copy
Sending Your Writing Out

What types of writing can I submit to publishers?

Newspapers are interested in essays, editorials, and articles. Some magazines publish stories, essays, and poetry; others publish essays and articles only.

Where should I send my writing?

First consider local newspapers, magazines, and other community publications. For national publications, turn to the *Writer's Market* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books) for ideas. Your school or local library will have a copy of this book.

How should I send my writing?

*Writer's Market* will explain that it is wise to write the publishers to request specific guidelines for submitting writing for their publications. Often, you will be asked to include a letter naming the title and the form of your writing (story, essay, article, and so on), a neat copy of your writing, and a self-addressed stamped envelope large enough for returning your writing after it has been read.

What should I expect?

Expect to wait awhile for a reply. Also realize that your writing may not be accepted for publication. In most cases, publishers choose only a few pieces of writing to publish. You may get a rejection letter. Though that sounds disappointing, even a rejection letter can prove helpful because publishers often explain why they did not select your writing for publication.

Submitting Your Writing On-Line

Where do I start my search for on-line publishing?

Start locally. See if your school has its own Web site for student writing. Also ask your teachers if they know of other Web sites that accept student work.

How do I search for these sites?

Use a search engine to find places to publish. Begin your search by entering a keyword phrase such as "submitting writing" or "student writing." Then check out sites from the list of results.

Does Write Source have a Web site?

Yes. You can visit our Web site at <thewritesource.com>. We suggest places where students can publish on the Net and invite students to submit for publication on our site as well.
Extension Activities
Extension Activity: **Reading Narratives**

Find an effective personal story in a book, newspaper, or magazine. Bring a copy of this story to class on the day you are expected to share it, and follow the directions below.

**Response Questions**

Answer these questions about the story.

- **Who is the subject of this story?**

- **What happens to this person, and what does he or she learn from the experience?**

- **When and where does the story take place?**

- **Why do you like this story? Be specific in your explanation.**

**Next Step:** Discuss the story with your classmates, using these questions as a guide. Make sure to tell where the story came from.
Extension Activity: Reflecting on Your Writing

Set your writing aside for a day or two. Then read it to yourself, and, if possible, read it to someone else. Afterward, think about your writing by completing each open-ended sentence below.

- The best part of my narrative is . . .

- The part that I would like to change is . . .

- As a writer, I still need to work on . . .

- While developing my narrative, the main thing I learned about writing is . . .
Extension Activity: **Preparing for a Writing Test**

When you take a writing test, you sometimes feel rushed. That means you need to have the things you have learned about writing clearly in your mind. Answering the questions below will help you prepare for any narrative writing you find on a test.

1. What does it mean to narrate? (See page 3.)
   
   *Narrate means to share or tell a story.*

2. What graphic organizer can you use to collect basic information for a narrative? (See page 11.)
   
   *You can use a 5 W's and H chart.*

3. What are two or three different ways to start a narrative? (See page 16.)
   
   *Make something happen right away. Introduce the main characters and get them talking. Give background information. Begin with a thoughtful question or a surprising statement.*

4. What are two or three different ways that you can develop the middle part? (See page 18.)
   
   *Include plenty of specific sensory details. Add dialogue. Use similes to make ideas clearer and more interesting. Add your personal thoughts and feelings.*

5. How can you end a narrative? Identify two possibilities. (See page 21.)
   
   *Add a final idea or two to make sure that readers understand everything. Explain what you learned from the experience, or how it changed you. Connect your experience to life in general.*