Inside Writing NARRATIVES

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

WRITE SOURCE®
GREAT SOURCE EDUCATION GROUP
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Wilmington, Massachusetts
Consulting Educators

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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.

Due Date

☐ 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**

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☐ Developing the Middle Part (pages 18-20)
☐ Ending Your Narrative (page 21)
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**REVISING: Improving Your Writing**

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**EDITING: Checking for Style and Correctness**

☐ Using Specific Verbs (page 50)
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☐ 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.

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**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.
Purpose | Read a sample personal narrative.

Reading a Sample Narrative

In this sample, writer Willie Ruff回忆s 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?

2. What background information is given in the second paragraph?

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.

4. Why was this experience so important or memorable to the writer?
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.)

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**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:*
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.

...............................................................................................................................
**Prewriting Using the 5 W's and H**


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<th><strong>WHO</strong> was involved in the experience?</th>
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<th><strong>WHAT</strong> exactly happened? (the actions or events)</th>
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<th><strong>WHEN</strong> did it happen?</th>
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<th><strong>WHERE</strong> did it happen?</th>
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<th><strong>WHY</strong> did it happen? (the background)</th>
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<th><strong>HOW</strong> 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.
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:**

**Sensory details:**

**Similes:**

**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.

**Narrative Structure**

- 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>about</th>
<th>during</th>
<th>yesterday</th>
<th>until</th>
<th>finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>first</td>
<td>meanwhile</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>then</td>
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<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>second</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>soon</td>
<td>as soon as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>third</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>later</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing
Connecting
Your Ideas
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.)

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In the middle part of your narrative, share all the important details about the experience. (Make sure that you answer the 5 Ws 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—“Rachei, 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.

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**Use the space below to write the ending of your narrative. If you don’t like the first ending, try another version.**

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Forming a Complete First Draft

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
Revising/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.
PURPOSE | Avoid cliches in your writing. Date _____________________

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.

1. .................................................................................................................................

2. .................................................................................................................................

3. .................................................................................................................................

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 . . . __________________________________________________________

I would change . . . ______________________________________________________

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

Date ___________________________
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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will my beginning grab the reader’s interest?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does my writing include all of the important actions related to the experience?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I include personal thoughts or feelings, sensory details, and dialogue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I sound truly interested in the experience?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does my narrative end effectively?</td>
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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.

An idea is made clearer and more interesting.

A personal thought is added.

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. 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. Dehnke 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.

1. run _______________________________ sprint _______________________________ jog _______________________________

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. ____________________________________

2. ____________________________________

3. ____________________________________

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.

1. So, what do you know about Jackie Robinson asked Marius.

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

8. 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.
PURPOSE | Learn about the editing process.

**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 photographs of the screaming riders.

My thoughts were interrupted as the train jerked forward, racing us against the wind. It seemed to be only a few seconds to the water at the bottom of the drop covered us like a blanket.

A wordy phrase is replaced.

A run-on sentence is corrected.

**Editing and Proofreading Symbols**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Capitalize a letter.</td>
<td>Lorraine Hansberry wrote <em>A Raisin in the Sun.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Lowercase a letter.</td>
<td>Her play tells the story of the Younger family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>Insert a period.</td>
<td>This play focuses on racial attitudes. It also ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( or )</td>
<td>Correct spelling.</td>
<td>Lena Younger, the family leader, is very(religious).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¡</td>
<td>Delete or replace.</td>
<td>Lena she makes a down payment on a nice house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Insert a comma.</td>
<td>Her son, Walter Lee, Jr., wants to buy a business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>′</td>
<td>Insert an apostrophe or quotation marks.</td>
<td>Walter Lee′s wife hopes for a larger apartment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Insert a question mark or an exclamation point.</td>
<td>What would Beneatha do with the money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>»</td>
<td>Start a new paragraph.</td>
<td>The play takes a surprising turn when ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Switch words or letters.</td>
<td>Walter gets the possible worst news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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 me and my father. 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)

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 bolders, 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. There lips were turning blue, but they seemed to think I was a
superhero. We held onto the wood while others through 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 proofreading 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sentence Structure</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I write clear and complete sentences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I write interesting sentences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Do my sentences contain personal thoughts and effective details? (pages 24-25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Punctuation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Does each sentence have end punctuation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I punctuate dialogue correctly? (page 31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Capitalization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I start all of my sentences with capital letters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I capitalize the names of people and places?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Grammar</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I use the correct form of verbs (give, gave, given)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I use subjects and verbs that agree in number? (Musicians perform; Laura dances.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Usage</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I choose the right word (your / you're)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I use specific verbs? (page 30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Spelling</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I check for spelling errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Did I use a dictionary or the spell checker on my computer?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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.)

2. What graphic organizer can you use to collect basic information for a narrative? (See page 11.)

3. What are two or three different ways to start a narrative? (See page 16.)

4. What are two or three different ways that you can develop the middle part? (See page 18.)

5. How can you end a narrative? Identify two possibilities. (See page 21.)