

Abd el hafid Boussouf University
Institute of Letters and Foreign Languages

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Module: Written Expression
and Comprehension
(Tutorial)
Level: Third year (all groups)

Narrative essay writing

Like all other types of essays in English, a narrative essay falls within the category of academic writing. It is meant to serve a given purpose the one of informing the reader about the state of affairs of a certain event, a given personal experience, or a story that took place in a given period in time. It is of particular interest to weave a good story line or scenario that keeps the reader attuned with what will happen next. One particularity of this type of writing is that it encourages the sense of creativity in the student's mind and appeals to higher thinking capacities since he will be in the need of inventing a main plan for the story and flavouring it with all the minor story events that raise the reader's curiosity and sense of interest.

Narrative writing might converge with descriptive writing in some aspects namely the writer needs to describe certain events in the plot to give a detailed view of what he wants to convey; at times he might need to describe characters in the story, the context of the events that take place in the narrative, and the events that constitute the plot. For sure both types of writing are complementary, but one should not focus on one aspect (description or narration) to the detriment of the main purpose of his writing.

The structure of a simple narrative story would include the following:

1. **A title:** not necessary, but its presence guarantees that the writer know what he is writing about.
2. **An introduction:** like all other essay types, the narrative essay is an academic type of writing and needs an introduction as a part of its general layout. The introduction here is related to the story plot since narration does not appeal to drafting about a theme or an issue.
3. **The beginning of the story:** This part sets the general background of the story and serves as a way of acclimatizing the reader with the narrative characters and coming events.
4. **Middle events:** This part is devoted to intertwine the events and to dive deeply into the story's events. It might include dialogues between characters, reporting about the main incidents....etc.

5. **End of the story:** This part is concerned with setting the concluding part of the story. To wit, the body of the narrative includes three major parts: A frame, the major part and the climax of the story, an intriguing conclusion. Usually, the introductory paragraph raises the reader's curiosity to continue the reading the paragraph. State the main story events and try to describe succinctly each situation and character as clearly as possible towards the end of your narrative you can invent an unexpected story development or set the reader to imagine a different end to the story (an open end for example).

The following is an example of a narrative essay.

The Rescue

Everything had been totally different that Sunday morning, when the two boys had set out on their walk up the cool, pine-scented mountainside near the village where they lived. Near the top, Peter and Michael had climbed onto a rock to admire the view of the valley far below them. That was when disaster had struck. On clambering down, Peter had tumbled awkwardly to the ground, his leg bent at a painful angle beneath him. Unable to move, he was forced to wait where he was, wrapped in Michael's jacket, while Michael had begun the long trek down the mountainside to fetch help. Michael looked down on the mountainside from the window of the helicopter. He felt increasingly helpless, as it looked totally different from the air and the network of tiny paths was mostly obscured from view by the thick covering of pine trees. To make matters worse, the light was fading fast and a thick blanket of mist was starting to form. Eventually the pilot and the three mountain rescue workers in the helicopter agreed that they would have to go back and continue the search for Michael's friend, Peter, on foot. By seven o'clock that evening, they had left the helicopter in the village and gathered a mountain rescue team of fifteen men. Michael felt disheartened and scared for his friend's safety. Slowly they ascended the mountain, scouring the numerous paths for Peter. The only sounds were crunching footsteps and the crackle of static on the walkie-talkies that the rescue workers carried to talk to each other. The mountainside was an eerie place after nightfall and gradually Michael started to wonder whether they would ever find Peter at all. Suddenly Michael heard a voice come over one of the walkie-talkies, "We've got him. We're taking him down." "I'm sorry," said Michael to his friend later in the warm safety of the hospital room, "I didn't realise it would take so long."

The doctors decided to keep Peter at the hospital for the night in case of complications with his leg. Before leaving, Michael looked down at his friend and

patted his shoulder as, silently, they both vowed never to go walking in the mountains again. What's too much is too much! I just knew I shouldn't have gone out that Friday afternoon. I'd had a strange feeling all morning, a feeling that something was going to happen, but I told myself, "Don't be afraid, Ida, you and your funny feelings! – pull yourself together and go and get the groceries." So I did, and you'll never guess what happened! OR : You know how someone feels when he is about to pay for his grocery shopping and finds his wallet is almost empty. Mumbling a poor excuse I headed for the bank, not prepared at all for what I was about to experience there. I was waiting patiently in the queue when suddenly two men pulling black masks over their heads, rushed through the front door and began shouting and waving guns in the air. "This is a robbery," yelled one of the masked men. "Do as we say and no one will get hurt!" The other bank robber herded us into a corner of the room and ordered us to lie face-down on the floor. I was terrified. My whole body froze in fear. Someone helped me down to the ground where all the other customers were huddled together, hardly even daring to breathe in case the men decided to carry out their threat and start shooting. The cashiers were remarkably calm but I suppose their training had prepared them for such a situation. They busily emptied the contents of their tills into a bag the robbers had pushed over the counter to them. I kept expecting to hear the wailing of sirens as the police hurried to rescue us, but there was only an unbearable silence. Almost as suddenly as they had entered, the masked raiders grabbed their bag and left the building, jumping into a beige getaway car. Minutes later, the police arrived. Several officers took off in their cars to see if they could catch the criminals, while others tried to calm us down enough so that they could take coherent statements.

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