

Eighth Grade -- Narrative

Personal Narrative: *A true story about yourself.*

The Traits

IDEA -- the main theme/purpose and content of the piece, supported with details

Situation: *the event on which your paper will focus.*

Point of view: *the angle from which the story is told.*

- a. **First-person:** *told through the eyes of the narrator -- uses "I, me, my."*
- b. **Third-person omniscient:** *narrator is all knowing and can see into the mind of the characters -- uses "he, she."*
- c. **Third-person limited:** *narrator tells the story from the perspective of one character -- uses "he, she."*

Physical description: *What a character looks like. It helps create a visual image of the character.*

Dialogue: *Written conversation between two or more characters for a purpose.*

Interior monologue: *A character's inner thoughts -- the thoughts that they are thinking to themselves. It helps to reveal information, to show character, and break up narration.*

Expressions: *Words that describe a character's facial response. It creates a visual image for the reader and helps them feel more connected to the characters. It makes the characters come alive.*

ORGANIZATION -- the internal structure of writing

Time and pacing: *The writer speeds up (uses less detail) during the slow parts of a story and slows down (uses lots of detail) during the exciting parts.*

Engages the reader: *a strategy used in the first paragraph that grabs the reader's attention and keeps them reading.*

Conclusion: *the last paragraph of an essay that brings the piece to an end. (There are many different types of conclusions.)*

Reflective close: *(a type of conclusion) Looks back at the experience and determines its importance. It is insightful and shows what the writer learned, how the experience changed the writer, or how they feel now.*

VOICE -- the tone and mood of the writing

Audience: *The person or people for whom the writing is intended. Explain to students: There are many different factors to consider when thinking about an audience: age, education, profession, etc.*

Mood: *The feeling or atmosphere the writer creates for the reader. How do you feel when reading this story?*

Tone: *The attitude of the narrator (the person telling the story). How did the main character feel?*

WORD CHOICE -- choosing strong verbs, adjectives, and figurative language to describe things in a way that is fresh and vivid. If used effectively, the writing will paint a picture in the reader's mind.

Vivid Verbs and Adjectives: *There are overused verbs and adjectives and then there are "vivid verbs and precise adjectives."* Ex: overused verb: run; a vivid verb: **dash**. Ex: overused adjective: yellow; precise adjective: **marigold**.

Practice:

Overused Verbs	Vivid Verbs
Went	
Said	

Sensory Details: *words that describe and appeal to our five senses (smell, sight, sound, taste, touch). Like vivid verbs and adjectives, they help create a visual image for the reader.*

Practice:

Smell	Sight	Sound	Taste	Touch

Figurative language: *language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary, literal meanings.* There are many different types of figurative language: simile, metaphor, alliteration, etc.

Idiom

Definition: *an expression used by a particular group of people with a meaning that is only known through common use.*

Examples:

- Add insult to injury.
 - Once in a blue moon.
 - See eye to eye.
 - Heard it through grapevine.
 - Miss the boat.
 - Kill two birds with one stone.
 - On the ball.
 - Cut corners.
-

Hyperbole

Definition: *a phrase that is exaggerated for impact.*

Examples:

He's 900 years old.

I am so hungry I could eat a horse.

He ran faster than the speed of light.

You could be Miss Universe.

It took light years for this to work.

I've told you a million times don't exaggerate.

I had to walk fifteen miles uphill both ways, in snow five feet deep.

If I don't get these jeans, I will DIE!

She cried for days.

The whole world was staring at me.

I had a ton of homework.

It took him two seconds to drive here.

I told you a thousand times!

I was so embarrassed, I thought I might die.

I am so tired I could sleep for a year.

Alliteration

Definition: *when the initial sound of a word is repeated in close succession.*

Examples:

The green grass glistened.

The ample apple was appetizing.

The luscious lettuce leaves went limp.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

See Sally by the sea shore.

Pleasantly plump pigeons picked at seeds.

Alice's aunt ate apples around August.

Dan's dog drank dirty water.

Personification

Definition: *when human qualities are attributed to an object, animal, or idea.*

Examples:

Opportunity knocked.

Time doesn't wait for anyone.

The coach groaned.

The sea lion laughed.

The picture demanded attention.

The sun kissed my cheeks.

The computer hates me.

Onomatopoeia

Definition: *words that imitate sounds.*

achoo	cheep	cackle	honk	slash	splatter
ahem	chirp	chatter	kerplunk	slither	splish
argh	chomp	clink	knock	slurp	squawk
bam	choo-choo	clip clop	roar	smack	squeak
bang	clang	cluck	rumble	snap	thump
boo	clank	clunk	rush	snarl	thwack
boo-hoo	clap	crackle	rustle	sniff	tic-toc
boom	clash	creak	screech	snip	tweet
bow-wow	clatter	haha	shuffle	snore	ugh
brring	click	hiccup	shush	snort	vroom
buzz		hiss	sizzle	splash	whack
whisper		hohoho	slap	splat	whirr

Simile: *compares two things that have something in common; uses the word like or as.*

He's as strong as an ox.

They fought like cats and dogs.

This house is as clean as a whistle.

I slept like a log.

The bed is as hard as a rock.

Metaphor

Definition: *compares two things that have something in common; does NOT use the word like or as.*

Examples:

She's such an airhead.

He's a diamond in the rough.

SENTENCE FLUENCY -- the writing flows -- sentences are well-built and varied in beginnings and length.

Transitions: *words or phrases that help tie ideas together. Transitions are more than just a list of words; they are necessary to create a fluid, whole piece of writing. There are many different types of transitions.*

Participial phrase: *an expression where the verb functions as an adjective to modify the noun or pronoun.*

Examples: I picked up the \$10 bill **lying on the ground**. Julia, **visiting from Brazil**, loves Italian food.

CONVENTIONS -- spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation

Edit: *To correct the surface details in writing such as spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation.*

Eighth Grade -- Informative

Informational Writing: *Writing that increases the readers' knowledge and comprehension of a subject, or helps readers better understand a procedure or process.*

Classification: *an organizational structure used in writing. It places information into categories. Its purpose is to increase a readers understanding of a subject.*

IDEA -- the main theme/purpose and content of the piece, supported with details

Purpose: *The reason a writer writes. Examples: To learn about something (e.g. answer a question), to reflect on something, to record an account of an event, to inform someone else about something, to entertain, to persuade, to make a point, etc.*

Thesis: *A thesis is a statement, which serves as the basis for all research or supporting arguments. It is the road map to your whole paper; it tells the reader where you are going. It must have the following:*

- *A complete sentence in the introductory paragraph*
- *Make an opinion/claim*
- *Pass the "how" or "why" test*

Example: Because fossil fuels cause negative environmental effects, we should use clean energy as much as possible.

ORGANIZATION -- the internal structure of writing

Credible Sources: *Information should come from sources that are credible and trustworthy.*

Credible: *worthy of belief or confidence.*

Trustworthy: *deserving of trust or confidence.*

Note Taking Tips:

- Record information you gather from your sources on the note card. Only one piece of information on each card.
- Reference the source and page number on the back of each card.
- Restate ideas in your own words (paraphrase) to avoid plagiarism.
- Always put quotation marks around direct quotes and write down the name of the person you are quoting.
- Take down all the ideas that you might be able to use. It is easier to throw a note card out than to retrace your research.

Bibliography: *A list of source materials used in preparation for writing an essay.*

Works Cited: *A list of source materials referenced in an essay.*

Topic sentence: *The first sentence in a paragraph that summarizes the main idea of the paragraph. It lets the reader know what information they can expect to find in the paragraph. It also keeps the writer focused.*

Supporting details: *facts, details, quotes, etc. that support the topic sentence and the thesis of the essay. They provide credibility to the writer's statements. Supporting details make the main idea found in the topic sentence stronger and clearer. Without supporting details, how does the reader know what the author is saying is true?*

Engages the reader: *A strategy used in the first paragraph that grabs the reader's attention and keeps them reading. There are many different types of engaging strategies.*

Conclusion: *the last paragraph of an essay that brings the piece to an end. (There are many different types of conclusions.)*

VOICE -- the tone and mood of the writing

Audience: *The person or people for whom the writing is intended. Explain to students: There are many different factors to consider when thinking about an audience: age, education, profession, etc.*

WORD CHOICE -- choosing strong verbs, adjectives, and figurative language to describe things in a way that is fresh and vivid. If used effectively, the writing will paint a picture in the reader's mind.

Academic language: *Language that helps us communicate in academic settings. Some academic language is used frequently regardless of the subject area. Examples: Identify, analyze, discuss, explain, etc.*

Discipline-specific language: *Words that are used within a particular subject area. Example: In English Language Arts, we use words like: mood, tone, inference, allusion, sensory details, etc.*

SENTENCE FLUENCY -- the writing flows -- sentences are well-built and varied in beginnings and length.

Transitions: *words or phrases that help tie ideas together. Transitions are more than just a list of words; they are necessary to create a fluid, whole piece of writing. (There are many different types of transitions.)*

Participial phrase: *an expression where the verb functions as an adjective to modify the noun or pronoun. Examples: I picked up the \$10 bill **lying on the ground**. Julia, **visiting from Brazil**, loves Italian food.*

CONVENTIONS -- spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation

Parenthetical Citations: *The purpose of a parenthetical citation is to document where you found your information. You give credit to the authors for using their work.*

When to use parenthetical citations:

- a. quotations
- b. ideas that are not common knowledge
- c. statistics
- d. figures
- e. charts
- f. graphs

Eighth Grade -- Argument

Argumentative Writing: *Attempts to convince readers to adopt a certain point of view or to take a particular action. Tries to get the reader to agree with the author's position.*

IDEA -- the main theme/purpose and content of the piece, supported with details

Purpose: *The reason a writer writes. To learn about something (e.g., answer a question), to reflect on something, to record an account of an event, to inform someone else about something, to entertain, to persuade, to make a point, etc.*

Claim: *An assertion or belief about a topic based on strong reasons.*

Thesis: *A thesis is a statement, which serves as the basis for all research or supporting arguments. It is the road map to your whole paper; it tells the reader where you are going.*

Reasons: *Thoughts or ideas that support your claim. Give strong reasons, not weak reasons.*

Evidence: *That which may prove or disprove something based on facts, statistics, research, etc.*

ORGANIZATION -- the internal structure of writing

Credible: *worthy of belief or confidence.*

Trustworthy: *deserving of trust or confidence. Information should come from sources that are credible and trustworthy.*

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Engages the reader: *A strategy used in the first paragraph that grabs the reader's attention and keeps them reading. There are many different types of engaging strategies.*

Conclusion: *The last paragraph of an essay that brings the piece to an end. There are many different types of conclusions.*

Strong statement: *A concluding strategy that makes a clear and assertive statement about the topic, claim, or thesis.*

VOICE -- the tone and mood of the writing

Objective Voice: *Written in such a way that the writer gives factual information without adding feelings or opinions.*

Audience: *The person or persons who are intended to read a piece of writing. The audience may not agree with your claim. It will also affect the language you use. If you are writing about a topic your audience isn't familiar with, you might have to explain the information in more detail.*

Counterclaim: *A contrasting, opposing, or refuting argument. It is important to show your audience that you have considered all sides before making your decision. It makes your opinion stronger.*

Rebuttal: *To refute or oppose an opponent's claim. After acknowledging the opposition's counterclaim, you must write a rebuttal, which explains why they are wrong and we are right.*

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Participial phrase: *an expression where the verb functions as an adjective to modify the noun or pronoun.*

Examples: I ate all the meat **burned from the barbeque**. The candy canes **hanging from the tree** may be eaten by the dog.

CONVENTIONS -- spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation

Parenthetical Citations: *The purpose of a parenthetical citation is to document where you found your information. You give credit to the authors for using their work.*

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Embedded Quotes: *Placing quotes in context within your writing. They must be embedded. Quotes should never be used as a standalone sentence, because if they aren't embedded, the reader might not be sure why you included it in the paper. There needs to be an explanation.*

There are three ways to embed quotes:

- a. Begin with an explanation.
Example: Trying to explain to Scout where babies come from Dill said he had heard of a man “who had a boat that he rowed across to a foggy island where all these babies were; you could order one” (Lee 144).
- b. Begin with the quote.
Example: “There was a man... who had a boat that he rowed across to a foggy island where all these babies were; you could order one” was Dill’s explanation to Scout about where babies come from (Lee 144).
- c. Quote is inserted in the middle.
Dill explained, “There was a man... who had a boat that he rowed across to a foggy island where all these babies were; you could order one” as Scout tried to understand where babies come from (Lee 144).