



Writing a Narrative

WHAT IS A NARRATIVE ESSAY?

Narration is using written or spoken word to tell a story. A narrative essay, then, is one in which the author tells a story. Narrative essays use the elements of plot, which are: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion. These are the same elements that stories use. Narrative essays also need to include characters and setting. Most importantly, narrative essays must have a purpose, a point to what is being narrated.

WHEN WRITING...

Narrative essays are most effective when specific language is chosen to evoke emotion in the readers. In a narrative essay, first person, or "I" can be used, but only if it makes for the clearest diction. Be sure that the story is organized. Telling a story out of order can easily confuse a reader.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REVISION

- As you revise, be sure that your purpose is clear from the beginning.
- Don't try to write in a surprise or twist ending. While these effects might work in a short story, they will confuse a reader of a narrative essay.
- Consider order. Narrative essays are usually written in chronological order (from beginning to end)
- Narratives and fiction are often written with specific elements: exposition (background that sets the scene), inciting incident (the moment that the action in the story starts), rising action (smaller obstacles on the protagonist's journey), climax (the moment the main obstacle resolves), falling action (the aftermath), and resolution (the new normal). While your life is obviously not a work of fiction you can use this framework to help tell your story and organize the events.
- Be sure that the language you have chosen is precise and not overly dramatic.
- Remember that you are in control of your story, and you only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing.

