

Narrative Essays



To narrate is to tell a story that explains: WHAT happened, WHEN it happened, and WHO was involved. The body of a narrative paragraph is developed according to time or chronological order, and the incident is explained as a series of small events or actions in the order in which they occurred. For example, a news report may be a narrative about how Congress voted, what the president did, or how a man was rescued from a burning building.

The various elements of narration include:

Characters – these are the people involved in the story. The main character or hero in the story is the protagonist. The character that clashes with or goes against the protagonist is the antagonist.

Conflict – this is the struggle, tension or opposition developed in the story. The conflict develops between one of the following:

1. the protagonist and the antagonist
2. the protagonist and the environment or nature
3. the protagonist and a group
4. the protagonist and him/herself

Plot – this is what happens in the story; it is the series of events that forms the action. The plot is arranged in a chronological (time) order and includes the following:

1. **the rising action**, where events lead to increased tension
2. **the climax**, where the tension reaches its peak or most important point before the conflict is resolved
3. **the falling action**, where events wind down to the story's conclusion

Theme – the main idea or ideas developed in the story.

Signal or Transitional Words – words that give order and time reference to the story. Examples of signal words include: first, next, then, before, after, finally, soon, later, meanwhile, upon, during, when, now, while