

NARRATIVE ESSAY

A **narrative essay** is an essay that *tells a story about a specific event or experience*. Narratives have a point, and the narrative (story) is used to **convey the point**. A narrative includes all the key events of the story, presented in time order. The narrative essay is more than just a listing of events; it often **uses descriptive and sensory information** to make the narrator's point and to make the story real for the reader. Consequently, narratives are often subjective rather than objective.

NARRATIVE ESSAYS ARE USUALLY WRITTEN FROM ONE OF TWO POINTS OF VIEW:

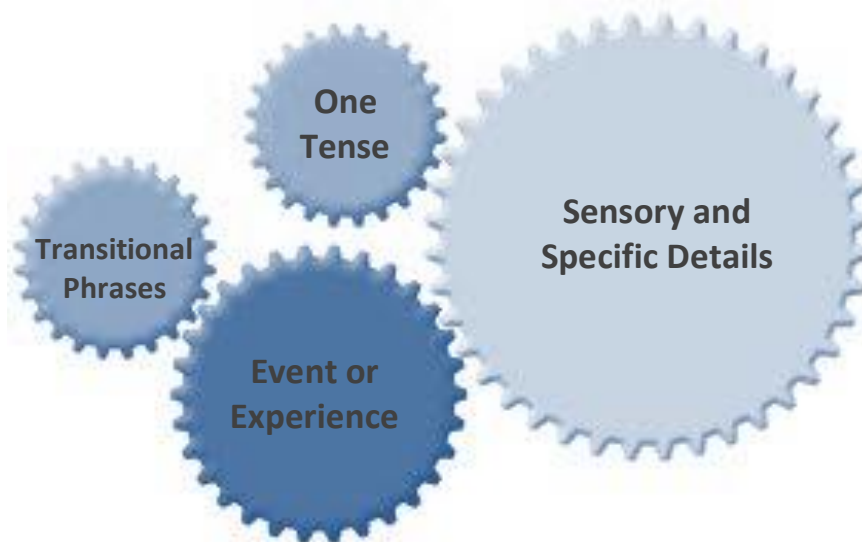
- *First Person (speaker):* Uses personal pronouns such as *I, we, me, my, mine*
- *Third Person (person spoken about):* Uses personal pronouns such as *she, he, it, they*

KEY COMPONENTS OF A NARRATIVE ESSAY

1. Some significant event, experience or relationship provides the organizing focus/idea
2. Sensory and specific supporting details that give the reader a close-up of the events, experience or relationship (*e.g. scenery, season, scents, sounds, dialogue, etc.*)
3. Events or activities in time sequence (*i.e. Beginning, Middle, End or Aftermath*).
4. Unified: everything in the essay refers to the central idea or focus
5. Written in one tense (*usually past tense*) and from one point of view (*first or third person*)
6. **Transitional phrases** that help the reader follow the sequence of actions

EXAMPLES OF TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

After a short time	Afterwards	As long as	As soon as
At last	At length	At that time	At the same time
Before	Earlier	Of late	Immediately
In the meantime	In the past	Lately	Later
Meanwhile	Now	Presently	Shortly
Since	Soon	Temporarily	Then
Thereupon	Until	When	While



A FEW QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

Beginning (establishes the point and the tone)

1. Why was this event or experience so important or memorable?
2. Why were you involved?
3. How did you feel at the beginning of the event or experience?

Middle (focuses on the events in time sequence)

1. What happened during the event or experience?
2. Was there a climax or very dramatic moment?
3. How did you feel during the event or experience?

End/Aftermath (reiterates/confirms the significance of the point)

1. What was the result or conclusion?
2. What did you like or dislike about this event or experience?
3. How did you feel after the event or experience?
4. What did you learn from this event or experience?

NARRATIVE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

- A. Lead-in: Background information that sets the tone and draws the reader in
- B. Tie-in: A sentence that connects the lead-in with the thesis statement
- C. Thesis: Sentence which states why this experience was so important or memorable

II. Body

- A. Details about the **beginning** of the event or experience
 1. Specific supporting ideas, details and examples
 2. Sensory and descriptive details
- B. Details about what occurred **during** the event or experience
 1. Specific supporting ideas, details and examples
 2. Sensory and descriptive details
- C. Details about what happened in the **final** stage of the event or personal experience
 1. Specific supporting ideas, details and examples
 2. Sensory and descriptive details

III. Conclusion

- A. Reiterate: Rephrases the thesis
- B. Review: Summarizes your main supporting ideas
- C. Reflect: Indicates the significance of the experience
- D. Wrap-up: Leaves the reader with a deep and powerful last thought

NOTE: *Each paragraph should focus on one specific aspect of the event or personal experience instead of skimming over a series of events.*

Portions of this handout were taken from Philip Egger's *Process and Practice: A Guide for Developing Writers* and the "Study Guides and Strategies" website (<http://www.studygs.net/fiveparag.htm>).