

Narrative Essay

The following outline is typical for developing a narrative essay. After you do your prewriting, you will be able to insert your content into the format indicated by the outline. You will want to create some variation based on your topic and purpose, so change the template to fit your purpose. Also, be aware that you may have several paragraphs where we have listed one Roman numeral, depending on the length and depth you are trying to achieve in your paper. This is a typical outline for a chronologically developed narrative. You can also use chronology creatively by playing with the order of points III, IV and V. Finally, you should add another level of detail designated with lower case letters.

Tips for Narratives

- Show, don't tell.
- Use description of all five senses to make your writing come alive.
- Create a meaningful conflict to drive your narrative.
- Add details to make your reader emotionally involved with your story.
- Make sure the resolution of the story fits the purpose and plot you have developed.
- Make sure your reader can understand what is happening.
- Use dialogue to show what your characters are like.
- Choose details that serve your purpose.
- Use the template below as a guide, but be creative.

I. Introduction

- A. Attention-getter/hook
- B. Significance of topic
 - 1. Significance of topic to you
 - 2. Significance of topic to your reader
- C. Thesis (What is the central idea you want to get across with your essay?)

II. Set-up

- A. Background about event—to allow a reader to understand
 - 1. History of people or event
 - 2. Relevant details about the event
- B. People involved
 - 1. Description of relevant physical characteristics
 - 2. Description of relevant personality characteristics
- C. Setting
 - 1. Description of setting using five senses
 - 2. Explanation of significance of the setting
- D. Short anecdote or foreshadowing
 - 1. Details establishing conflict
 - 2. Details establishing the stakes for people

III. Beginning of Event

- A. Explain how things started to happen
- B. Show what people did to reach the point where the event was imminent—point of no return.
- C. Detailed sensory description of what happened
- D. Feelings about what happened

IV. Climax of Event

- A. Things come to a head
- B. Detailed sensory description
- C. Feelings about what happened

V. Resolution of Event

- A. Tell how things end up
- B. Sum up the event