

The Personal Narrative

The Narrative Essay: The Basic Task

- Write an essay about a significant event in your life.
- Choose an event that will be engaging for readers and that will, at the same time, tell them something about you.
- Tell your story dramatically and vividly.
- Use first person to tell your story.

Example Topics:

Think about a friend or family member that you admire. It should be someone who is a role model for you. Write about a time when he/she did something that showed their kindness or other good qualities.

Think about a time you were surprised about something that happened to you. It could be a happy surprise or a disappointment. Write about the event.

Think about a time you succeeded at something that was hard for you to do. It could be something you finally learned how to do at school or in a game—or any other moment when you learned a difficult concept or skill. Write about what happened when you learned this.

If your family celebrates special events such as birthdays, holidays, or other special times, choose one family event and write about it.

Description and Dialogue: “Showing” the Story vs. “Telling” the Story

When recounting your story, you will want the reader to “be there” with you, picturing what you saw, hearing what you heard, and feeling what you felt. It is important in your essay, therefore, to provide detailed descriptions of the places and people involved. You may also want to include some dialogue, letting some of the characters in your story speak for themselves. Don’t overdo it with dialogue. Doing so will simply bog the story down.

Format:

- Typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font.
- 1.0” margins (the default is 1.25”, you *will* have to change it!)
- Concentrate on details, voice, and showing rather than telling.
- **Length:** 1 page