

STUDENT TIPS FOR WRITING A FICTIONAL NARRATIVE

Hickman Charter School

2012-2013 School Year

I ALREADY DID A NARRATIVE. I have to do another one?? The first narrative you wrote was a “personal” narrative—telling about something you did or experienced. Now you’re going to “invent” something that your created fictional character does. But... the basics of a fictional narrative will be very similar to the personal narrative...

SEARCH!! Think about books you’ve read, movies you’ve seen, places you’ve been or heard about... Do you read the newspaper? You can find all kinds of story ideas there. A cat made the news when he disappeared and was found in Chicago, 1300 miles from his home in New Mexico. Cats can’t talk so we’ll never know how he made the journey. But we could make up a story and tell it from the cat’s perspective. That would be a fictional narrative!! Do you get the idea?

FOCUS! Think back to when you wrote your personal narrative. Two questions helped you focus your writing: “What is my point?” and “Why am I writing this?” These can be good focus questions for a fictional narrative too.

We usually think of fictional stories as something that entertain, but they can teach lessons too. If your story teaches a truth or lesson it becomes more meaningful for the reader. Made-up stories that convey a message are fun to write. Porquoi stories explain a “truth” about animals in a fictional way—how the zebra got his stripes. A fable is a story whose main character is an animal, and it imparts a moral lesson. You may be familiar with *Aesop’s Fables*. King Arthur and Robin Hood are characters associated with legends. With your mom’s permission, search the internet for further information about these entertaining fictional stories.

Just like a personal narrative, your fictional narrative will be a brief part of a bigger picture, so identify the part of the picture that you want to capture in your story. If you were writing about the cat, and you decided that the cat stowed away in a moving van, write about the moments after the van started to move, when the cat got hungry. What happened? Tell a small part well instead of telling a big part poorly.

ORGANIZE Like personal narratives, fictional narratives have a **beginning, middle and end**. They also include a setting and characters. A problem to

solve or a conflict will make them more interesting to read. Once you have ideas, use a web, outline or other graphic organizer to keep your focus!

WRITE Brainstorm to gather details that you can use to develop your story. Whether you are writing truth or fiction, your reader will “experience” what you write through the words you choose. Use **specific, concrete details** rather than vague ones. Instead of saying “Jane was mad,” show how you know Jane was mad. “Jane clenched her fist, trying to control the raging anger that threatened to erupt.”

Use action verbs instead of “verbs of being” (be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been). Don’t say “Rocco was tired.” Instead, say “Rocco rubbed his eyes as he tried to stifle another yawn.” Show—don’t tell! Use brightly colored words, not gray foggy ones!

REVISE It makes your story better! A good way to start the revision process is to find a good listener, and read your story aloud. Somehow, it just seems “different” if you hear it than if you just read it!

Because fictional stories usually have characters that talk, your story will probably have conversation. Revise so that you choose the best words possible to convey what you’re trying to share with the reader.

“Stop!” screamed Jane.

“Stop!” Jane’s voice rose as she stood paralyzed with fear, watching the approaching mountain lion.

“Stop!” said Jane, her eyes warily following the mountain lion’s movements.

(Did you notice the use of quotations? And did you notice that each quotation is a separate paragraph? Not sure about the whole quotation issue?? Check out a *Write Source* book from the annex!)

Ready to practice conversation-writing skills online?

<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/writerschoice/rws/mslessons/grade6/lesson30/exercises.shtml>

SHARE! After you’re satisfied that you’ve done your best, print your story on fancy paper, add a border or picture or clipart. Send it to your grandma. Stick it on the refrigerator. Enter a contest. Or..... **give it to your EC!!!**

TEACHER TIPS FOR FICTIONAL NARRATIVE WRITING

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READ Before you hand your children a paper and pencil and ask them to write, show them what a narrative is by reading examples of narrative stories! As you read, talk about what makes a story a narrative:

- told in chronological order with a beginning, middle and ending
- told from the viewpoint of a particular character in the story

Need examples? Look no further than our adopted reading texts. Both the Houghton Mifflin and the Prentice Hall books contain examples of narrative writing at each grade level. Read the examples in the text, or select other narrative stories. There are many.

Houghton-Mifflin 2.1 Adventures, page 42

Houghton-Mifflin 3.1 Rewards, page 288

Houghton-Mifflin 4 Journeys, page 324

Houghton-Mifflin 5 Expeditions, page 286

Houghton-Mifflin 6 Triumphs, page 164

Prentice-Hall 7 Bronze, page 506

Prentice Hall 8 Silver, page 602

PROVIDE TOOLS Once your child is familiar with narrative writing, providing an appropriate graphic organizer is a great next step. But don't just hand it over to them. Work on it together! (see "six kids???" section for ideas...) Use the one provided, or search the website that accompanies our Houghton Mifflin reading texts for additional ones: http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/k_5/graphorg/index.html

ENCOURAGE As your student starts to write, look for ways to encourage his/her efforts! When it comes time to revise, select **one** area to emphasize. Perhaps reorganizing sentences would make the work easier to read. Being more intentional with word choice might make for more interesting reading. When editing, focus on **one** element: for fictional narrative we suggest you pay particular attention to conversation-writing skills. By keeping

The fictional narrative essay:

- is told from a particular point of view
- usually seeks to entertain the reader
- uses many of the same elements you'd find in a personal narrative
- is filled with precise detail
- uses vivid verbs and modifiers

the appropriate grade level of the *Write Source* books available (annex checkout), you'll always have the answer to those iffy grammar and punctuation questions! **Teach your kids to use these books!!** (And even though you don't make

every correction possible, make mental notes of areas that you'll want to be sure to cover during the course of your teaching apart from writing.)

SIX KIDS??? Don't despair! Just like you did with the personal narratives, have them all write about the same thing! Remember the butcher paper? Tack it back up on the wall and begin brainstorming, letting each child contribute ideas. After you have a good assortment of ideas, organize them! Cut the paper up and group the ideas together, or circle them with different colored markers...

We also talked about using post-it notes for brainstorming and organization. Give each kid a pad of them, have them write their ideas, and then bring everyone together to organize!

Once that's done, start the writing. A younger child might do well to produce a 5 sentence paragraph (topic sentence, 3 details and a concluding sentence). Older kids could follow the same model, only write 5 paragraphs instead of 5 sentences: an introductory paragraph followed by first, next, then paragraphs, and finally a "what I learned" paragraph for a conclusion. That middle kid could do 3 paragraphs: beginning, middle, end.

Next, revise and edit by having a group sharing time and let everyone read his/her piece. Encourage input, but require that ideas be shared in pairs: first a compliment, then a constructive point!

Finally, have fun producing final drafts—dress them up by using special paper, pictures, drawings, etc.

NEED MORE? Check out the annotated list of references included with this packet.

Basic Rules for Writing and Punctuating Dialogue

1. Place quotation marks around the words that actually come out of the person's mouth.
"Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words," said Mark Twain.
2. Place the comma inside closing quotation marks when the speaker's tag (the word such as "said") follows the quotation.
"Let's go," Gilda said.
3. A comma after a tag preceding the quotation does not go inside a quotation mark.
Harry said, "Come on, Ray. It'll be fun."
4. Use quotation marks around each part of a divided quotation. Remember to set off the speaker's tag with commas.
"I'm not sure," said Ray, "that I feel like it."
5. Capitalize the first word of what the person actually says, no matter where it occurs in the sentence.
Mariah's mother asked her husband, "Where are you planning on keeping this elephant?"
6. Place ending periods and commas inside the end quotation mark.
Mariah said, "I want an elephant for my birthday."
7. Place proper punctuation at the end of the sentence.
"I want an elephant for my birthday," Mariah repeated.
8. Establish the name of each speaker the first time that person speaks in the dialogue. You do not need to repeat the speaker's name throughout the dialogue or say he said, she said or he answered again and again.
9. Avoid overusing the word "**said**" when writing dialogue. See example on the "Student Tips" page, revision section. After reading it, if you **STILL** want a list of words to use in place of "said", e-mail rlemos@hickman.k12.ca.us or ask your coordinator for one.
10. Each time a person speaks, begin a new paragraph.
Mariah stomped her foot and demanded, "I want an elephant for my birthday!"

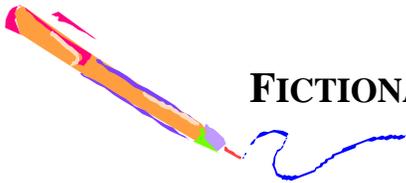
"Certainly, honey," her father replied. "Anything for my angel."

Added to and condensed from:

<http://teacherwriter.net/2009/02/25/how-to-use-proper-punctuation-when-writing-dialogue/>

<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/writerschoice/rws/mslessons/grade6/lesson30/index.shtml>

http://teachers.henrico.k12.va.us/short_pump/douthit_c/Site/NarParDiag.html



FICTIONAL NARRATIVE WRITING SAMPLE RUBRIC

Name _____ Date _____

Assignment/Title _____

I think....

Parent/Teacher thinks...

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

Is it interesting to read?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

Writing is easy to understand and follow. (*organization, idea*)

Detail is precise and rich.. (*word choice*)

Reader's attention is captured. (*idea, voice*)

Sentences show variety in length, beginning words, type and structure. (*fluency*)

An appropriate amount of information is given. (*idea*)

The text sounds good when read aloud. (*fluency*)

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

Is it easy to read and understand?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

The story clearly has a beginning, middle and end. (*organization*)

Appropriate transitional words and phrases enhance the paper's flow. (*organization*)

Conversation is correctly punctuated and paragraphed. (*conventions*)

Sentences are grammatically and structurally correct: no run-ons or fragments. (*fluency, conventions*)

Paragraphs are structured: topic sentence, details, closing or bridge sentence. (*organization*)

Spelling, capitalization and punctuation are correct. (*conventions*)

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

Is the assignment complete?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

The writing is of a fictional nature.

A graphic organizer or plan has been used and is attached.

A rough draft (attached) shows evidence of revision and editing.

The final draft is visually attractive and appropriate for the purpose of the assignment.

In complete sentences, use the vocabulary of this rubric to tell what you like about this piece of writing.

Tell what you will seek to improve in your next piece of writing.

Fictional Narrative Writing Resources

ANNEX: We have a number of resources available for checkout in our Annex. Some include activities that can be easily reproduced; others are more of a reference that can be used in conjunction with texts or other assigned work.

Easy Grammar: The book is huge. It can be boring and overwhelming, BUT it provides great examples and practice pages. Selecting pages/topics that match the writing being done is a good way to use this resource. For the **5-6/Level 1** book, check out page 539. **Easy Grammar Plus** book page 599, and workbook pages 600-607 also address the subject of punctuating conversation.

Write Source Books: Practically one for every grade! If you only have room for one on your shelf, choose **Write On** (pages 511-517). Right now there are nearly 50 available for checkout. Also available are texts more appropriate for younger students.

Write Source: pages 511-517

Writers Express page 350

Write on Track page 302

WEB: The internet, though a vast resource of materials, can be like navigating a maze or chasing rabbits! You might never get to your final destination, and the destination might change as you explore!! Just beware so that you don't spend all your teaching time looking for something to teach!! If you only have time for one, choose the first one!

<http://www.worksheets4teachers.com/PDF/NarrativeWriting.pdf>

Narrative Writing, a unit for grades 3 – 6 (but would be good for 7-8 as well), provides a series of lessons that support the writing strand of the language curriculum. Blackline masters offer opportunities for consolidation and practice. If you only have time for one online writing resource, this would be it!! Free download: the book is nearly 100 pages and could represent enough teaching to last from now til June. Your students will be better writers for having used it!!!

http://www.greatsource.com/iwrite/students/s_fic_narr.html

This web page has all the helps necessary to get your students on the right track for their narrative writing. It starts with a basic plan, what we would refer to as the process of writing. Within each step in the process you'll find clickable links to various graphic organizers and planning tools, as well as checklists and questions.

<http://www.iss.k12.nc.us/writing/imaginative.htm>

A “go to” for fictional writing; divided into 9 parts, and includes everything from prompts to word lists to sample stories, all focused on fictional writing. The information is appropriate for middle/upper grade elementary students.

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/narrative.html>

This page represents a whole collection of pages—all that focus on narrative writing, both fictional and nonfiction. Some are lessons that are suited for classroom teaching, others link to handy-to-use workbook-type pages.