

# Examples of Anecdotes

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Anecdotes cover a wide variety of stories and tales, especially since they can be about basically any subject under the sun. What is an anecdote, you ask? An anecdote is a short story, usually serving to make the listeners laugh or ponder over a topic. Generally, the anecdote will relate to the subject matter that the group of people is discussing.

For example, if a group of coworkers are discussing pets, and one coworker tells a story about how her cat comes downstairs at only a certain time of the night, then that one coworker has just told an anecdote.

## Using Anecdotes

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Understanding the context in which an anecdote is placed will help you to better recognize the purpose and point of these brief stories. All of these following cases are examples of times when anecdotes are used:

- At the beginning of a speech about fire safety, the speaker tells a short cautionary tale about a serious injury that occurred as a result of not following protocol.
- During a lunchtime discussion about favorite recipes, one of the people in the group tells a story about one of her tried and true recipes gone wrong.
- A mother tells her son a story about a family vacation when she was growing up.
- A student writes a brief account about his favorite holiday moment for a school assignment.
- Before beginning a lecture on why staying out late is inappropriate, a father tells his daughter about a scary incident he had one time when he stayed out too late.
- A teacher tells a brief account about the first Thanksgiving to her students before beginning a lesson plan on the pilgrims and Native Americans' interactions.
- Before beginning a tutoring session, the tutor tells the tutee how he used to struggle with the subject matter in the past and how he managed to grow past these difficulties.
- During an informative session about on campus tutoring services, the speaker tells a story about a successful session she had with a student.
- An animal rescue team tells stories to an audience about the many successful rehoming situations that they have had over the years.
- Before Christmas morning breakfast, parents tell their children about their very first Christmas together.
- High school students go around the classroom telling their favorite memories from elementary school.
- An elderly couple shares stories about past eras with visitors to a nursing home.
- During a conversation about amusement parks, a child tells a story about his favorite trip

to Disney World.

- Before giving a presentation on the dangers of drug abuse, the speaker tells the audience how he himself used to abuse drugs and explains the negative effects it brought about in his life.
- While sitting around a campfire, each group member shares a true ghost or spirit sighting story with the others.
- Members of a Girl Scout troop share stories about their favorite activity or trip that the group went on during the year.
- Church youth group leaders tell stories about their conversion or recognition experiences to the teenagers in the group.

All of these stories serve particular purposes.

## Purpose of Anecdotes

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### To Bring Cheer

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Sometimes telling a story just makes people laugh or brightens the mood. In the example about favorite recipes, the woman is sharing a tale with her friends or coworkers about a time that she experienced a disaster in the kitchen. Whether she tried to boil an egg without water or made fudge that turned as hard as a rock, the other people are sure to have a good laugh.

### To Reminisce

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In several of these examples, such as the parents on Christmas morning and the elderly couple, people are talking about their pasts. They are looking back favorably on moments in their lives and sharing the joy of that time with others.

### To Caution

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In the fire safety case, the speaker is trying to show the audience what can happen if they do not follow proper procedures. Sometimes just laying out rules for individuals is not effective, and they need to hear frightening stories of dangers that can be avoided by following these regulations.

### To Persuade or Inspire

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Returning to the examples about tutors and tutoring sessions, the speakers want the students to know they are there to help, and that they have faced similar struggles. They want the students to know that there is the possibility of a brighter future if they put the work in.

Of course, anecdotes do not have to serve such specific purposes all the time. They can just be part of a natural conversation with other people.

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By YourDictionary

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