

Writing a Narrative About an Incident That Changed Me

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Self-Editing, Peer Editing

Assignment

Your assignment is to write a personal narrative about an incident that brought about change in your life.

Steps

Prewriting

1. Revisit your prior work in this unit, looking especially at significant incidents that brought change to your life. List these incidents and indicate how each changed you.
2. Share your list with a classmate, and work together to choose an incident that changed you in a significant way. Be sure the incident meets the following criteria:
 - ▶ is interesting to a reader
 - ▶ has a clear beginning, middle, and end
 - ▶ had an effect on you in a significant way.
3. List the specific events that make up the incident. Organize the sequence of events for your narrative by creating a Memory Map.
4. As you create your new Memory Map, use the following pointers to help you organize your thoughts.
 - ▶ Include the setting – the time and place where the incident occurred – and the situation. Who was involved? What was your life like *before* the incident? What was the incident?
 - ▶ Describe the beginning of the incident. How did the incident start? What were you doing, thinking, and feeling? Who else was there? What were they doing and saying?
 - ▶ Continue describing the sequence of events in the middle of the incident. Include important details so that the reader can experience this incident with you.
 - ▶ Explain how the incident ended. Describe how the incident changed you. What is your life like now compared to what it was like before the incident?
 - ▶ Reflect on the incident. What did you learn or discover or realize from this incident? How did it change you? What are the future implications of this incident? What do you now know that you did not know before?

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Drafting

5. Use your Memory Map to guide you as you draft your narrative. Remember that the point of the narrative is to tell the story of an incident that changed you. Narrate the story in a powerful and vivid way so others can “see” the incident and also reflect on its significance.
6. Look back at the narratives you have read to get ideas about how to create an opening or introduction to your narrative that hooks readers and interests them enough to continue reading. Experiment with using AQQS (Activity 1-10) so that you can see which kind of opening works best with your own narrative.
7. Refer to the checklist you created in Activity 1-11, “What Makes a Good Narrative,” to make sure you have included all of the narrative elements.
8. Brainstorm titles that will give a clue about your essay and that will catch your reader’s attention. Read your ideas to a partner to see which one is most interesting.

Revising Through Self-Assessment

9. Check to see whether the beginning, middle, and end of the incident are clear and easy to understand.
10. Check to see whether your essay includes all of the elements of a good narrative identified in your checklist.
11. Read your personal narrative softly to yourself, correcting any mistakes that you notice along the way. Make sure your essay sounds right.
12. Mark your text as follows to evaluate your draft and see where you may still need revision.
 - a. Highlight (you may want to use different colors) the following elements in your narrative:
 - ▶ Transitions (words or phrases)
 - ▶ Dialogue
 - ▶ Vivid verbs
 - ▶ Descriptive details (adjectives and sensory language) that make the incident come aliveIf your draft is lacking these elements, you will probably want to add them in your final draft.
 - b. Underline the sentence you think tells about the change in you as a result of this incident. Label this sentence “Change.”
 - c. Revisit the Scoring Guide and ask yourself how successful you have been in meeting the criteria of the assignment. Make notes, either in the margin or by using sticky notes, of any additional changes you want to make.

Revising Through Reader Response

Exchange papers with another student. Read your classmate's narrative very carefully; then respond to these questions/directions.

13. Underline especially visual and vivid descriptions in the narrative.
14. Put a big star by one area that could benefit from more detail. What might your partner do in this section?
15. What is the hook the writer uses to get readers interested? If there is no hook, suggest an idea that would grab the reader's attention. (Use the AQQS model.)
16. Do you have a clear sense of the progress and sequence of events? If yes, why? If not, why not?
17. Explain in your own words what happened (the incident) and how it changed the writer.

Editing for Publication

18. Rewrite your draft, incorporating the changes that you and your classmate identified.
19. To create a publishable draft, you must edit your work to make it as error-free as possible. Double-check the use and spelling of all of the words you used from the Word Wall. Use all the other tools available to you (such as dictionaries, software spell-check, and grammar references) to create a draft that is as error-free as possible. Edit dialogue for correct punctuation.
20. Following your teacher's directions for formatting, produce a publishable draft of your personal narrative.

Writing a Personal Narrative About an Incident That Changed Me

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Ideas	<p>The content shows a sophisticated response to prompt by effectively telling a story of an incident that changed the writer.</p> <p>The story utilizes narrative elements that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a vivid setting • a vivid portrayal of the event and people involved • effective dialogue that is important to plot and character and that points to the significance of the event. <p>The author's reflection carefully analyzes the event and makes a clear connection between the event and its importance in his or her life.</p>	<p>The content shows an adequate response to prompt by telling a story of an incident that changed the writer.</p> <p>The story includes the narrative elements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear setting • a description of the event with some detail and vividness • use of dialogue to show the feelings and thoughts of the people involved. <p>The author's reflection shows some connection between the event and its importance in his or her life.</p>	<p>The content does not adequately respond to the prompt; it incompletely tells a story of an incident that changed the writer.</p> <p>The story is missing some or all narrative elements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear setting • use of details • dialogue that shows the feelings and thoughts of the characters. <p>The author's reflection lacks a connection between the event and its importance in his or her life.</p>
Organization	<p>The narrative is well-organized and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an engaging beginning that highlights an event • a detailed middle that describes the event • a clear ending that brings closure • smooth transitions that guide the reader through the text. 	<p>The narrative is organized with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a beginning that identifies an event • a middle that describes the event • an ending that brings closure • transitions to guide the reader through the text. 	<p>The narrative lacks organization and coherence. Some of the following parts are missing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a beginning that clearly identifies the event • an organized middle • an ending that brings closure • transitions to guide the reader.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Use of Language	The narrative is grammatically correct and effectively uses descriptive details (vivid verbs, adjectives, and sensory language) to make the incident come alive.	The narrative is grammatically correct and uses descriptive details (vivid verbs, adjectives, and sensory language) to make the incident clear.	The narrative contains grammatical errors and does not use descriptive language (vivid verbs, adjectives, and sensory language) to make the incident clear.
Conventions	Writing contains few or no errors in spelling, punctuation, or capitalization.	Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes do not detract from the narrative.	Spelling, punctuation, or capitalization mistakes detract from meaning and/or readability.
Evidence of Writing Process	Extensive evidence reflects the various stages of the writing process.	Evidence reflects the various stages of the writing process.	Little or no evidence reflects the stages of the writing process.
Additional Criteria			

Comments:
