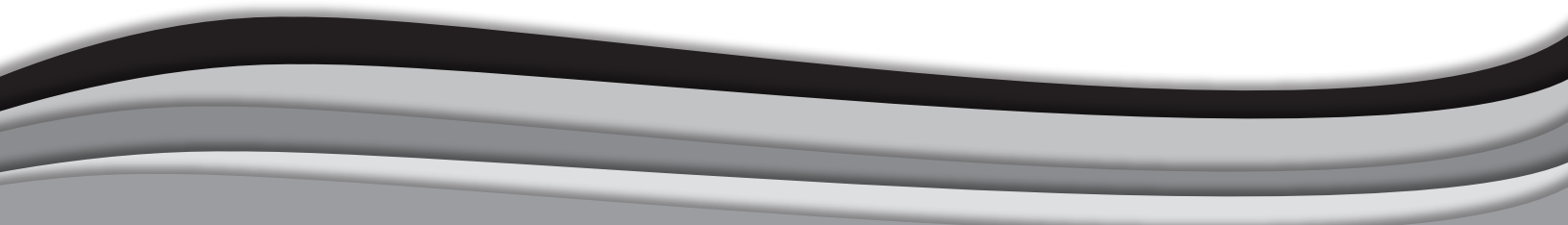
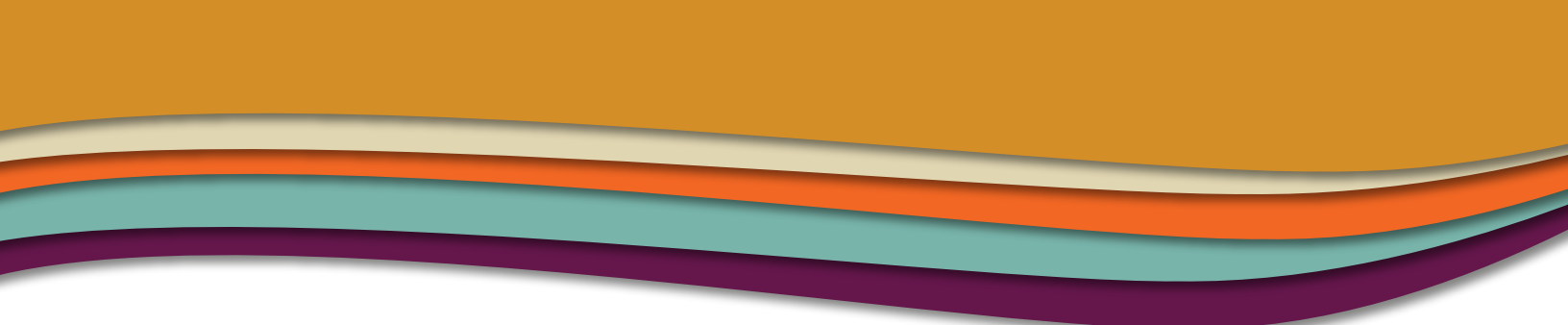




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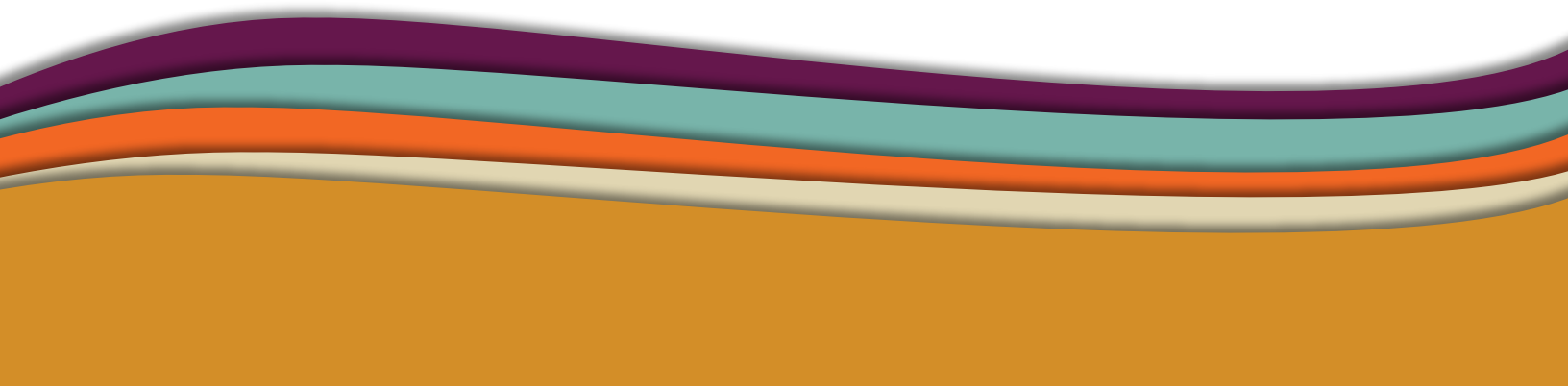
**Teaching Elements
of Personal Narrative Texts**
Online Companion Workbook





This Write for Texas Online Companion Workbook serves as an optional guide that participants can use as they work through each online resource.

This Companion Workbook includes the following:

1. Copies of the handouts for each resource—these handouts, which are also available electronically and can be downloaded, read, and/or printed within each resource, include the following:
 - **Classroom teacher handouts:** Instructional practices for teachers to use as they plan and implement reading and writing instruction in their content area classrooms
 - **Classroom templates:** Masters for students to use—these handouts can be kept in students' writing folders or notebooks
 - **Professional connection handouts:** Informative materials for teachers that provide background and research-based information related to effective content area reading and writing instruction
 - **Online activity handouts:** Materials for teachers to use as they complete online practice activities and view related videos
 2. A brief explanation of how teachers use the handouts as they work through each online resource
 3. Tips for how to use some of the materials and strategies in the classroom
 4. Related online resource participant activities, including the following:
 - **Online practice activities and videos:** Opportunities for teachers to practice (sometimes in the role of a student or teacher) the reading and writing strategies (Some resources include videos.)
 - **Classroom teaching activities:** Opportunities for teachers to try the strategies in the classroom and think about how to incorporate the instructional practices into their content area curriculum
 - **Teaching journal questions:** Opportunities for teachers to think about and record (on paper or electronically) their responses to reflection questions, ideas, and other thoughts that relate to the online resources
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Handouts

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts

Gateway Resource TPNT0001

Teaching Personal Narrative Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TPNT0001

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts is the first online resource in the Teaching Personal Narrative Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: <http://writefortexas.org>. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Personal Narrative Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts has three sections. The suggested time to complete all three sections is 30 minutes, plus preparation and class time to implement a classroom teaching activity with your students. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Personal Narrative Elements

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Personal Narrative Elements (Handout 34)
- **Classroom template:** Personal Narrative Elements Mini-Chart (Handout 35)

After watching the first video in this section, review the handouts.

Tip: Introduce each of the elements, usually one at a time. Explicitly model how to identify the elements in mentor texts. After you have modeled and taught the elements, post the mini-chart in the room and/or have students place it in their writing folders or notebooks.

Section 2. Teaching Genre Elements Through Mentor Texts

- **Online activity handout:** Using Mentor Texts to Identify Personal Narrative Elements (Handout 36)
Read the mentor text “Tights and Camo” on the handout.

- **Online practice activity and video:**

After watching the video, review the “Tights and Camo” essay and identify other personal narrative elements. Write the elements in the left column and mark the corresponding parts of the essay. Use Handout 34: Personal Narrative Elements (from Section 1) as a resource.

Section 3. Teaching Conventions in Context: Personal Narrative

- **Online activity handout:** Using Model Sentences to Teach Conventions in Context

Review the handout.

- **Online practice activity:**

Complete the Using Model Sentences to Teach Conventions in Context handout using the mentor text “Tights and Camo” on Handout 36.

- **Classroom teaching activity:**

- Select a mentor text aligned with your curriculum. Identify a model sentence that illustrates a written convention your students have difficulty using correctly in their own writing.
- Teach the targeted written convention in context using the instructional practices—noticing and imitating.
- Refer to the handout Teaching Conventions in Context: Using Model Sentences (Handout 14) from the resource Teaching Written Conventions in Context (TSS0001) for more information about teaching written conventions in context using model sentences.

Personal Narrative Elements

English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Glossary Definition

Personal narrative: an expressive literary piece written in first person that centers on a particular event in the author's life and may contain vivid description as well as personal commentary and observations

Elements

Personal narratives are based on real-life (true) personal experiences that have significant meaning for the writer. The experience may have resulted in the writer gaining insight or learning a lesson. The writer narrates or tells a story to describe the personal experience. Personal narratives are written in the first person ("I") point of view.

1. Narrow, Clearly Defined Focus

Personal narratives have a narrow, clearly defined focus. The writer focuses on a central idea (theme or message) based on a significant event and why it is important or meaningful to the writer. This focus is sustained throughout the essay.

The central idea is the point of a personal essay. It is similar to the thesis or controlling idea in expository or persuasive essays, but the central idea may not always be conveyed in one specific place like a thesis. The author may convey the central idea in several places within the essay.

The central idea communicates to the reader a sense of the experience and its significance (meaning, insight, or lesson learned).

Visualization and scaffolds such as sentence stems can help writers clarify the significance of a particular event or experience to their lives.

For example, writers may do the following:

- Visualize the events or the experience they will write about. Writers imagine themselves once again in that experience and focus on their feelings, thoughts, and impressions.
- Think about why the experience was important to them
 - This is important to me now because it . . .
 - I will always remember this experience because it . . .
 - This experience is worth writing about because it . . .

2. Character Descriptions

Personal narratives describe the characters involved in the writer's personal experience. The characters are developed through interesting details that describe each character's appearance, actions, and words. The writer may visualize each character and then describe how the character looks, acts, and sounds.

3. Dialogue

Incorporating some dialogue in a personal narrative makes the characters and the description of the personal experience come alive for the reader. Dialogue moves the narrative along and often reveals something about the characters. Dialogue should sound natural and not be overused.

When writing dialogue in an essay, the character's words are enclosed inside quotation marks. Quotation marks signal a direct quotation and typically adhere to the following conventions:

- Opening quotation marks are placed before the first word a character speaks. Closing quotation marks are placed after the last word a character speaks (even if several sentences are spoken).
- The writer begins a new paragraph each time the speaker changes or a different character speaks.
- Each sentence of a direct quotation begins with a capital letter.
- A comma is used to separate a direct quotation from a speaker tag such as "he said." The comma is placed inside the closing quotation marks.
- Periods also are placed inside closing quotation marks. All other punctuation (exclamation marks, question marks) are placed outside closing quotation marks. The one exception to this rule is that when a punctuation mark is part of a quote itself, it is placed within the closing quotation marks (e.g., "What is the answer to the first question?" the teacher asked the class.).

4. Setting Description

Personal narratives also describe the setting (where and when the event or experience happened).

The setting can be vividly described by using sensory details to bring the experience to life. The writer determines which details of the setting are most important in conveying the personal experience and its significance or meaning. For example, what does the writer smell, see, hear, taste, or feel?

5. Strong Introduction

Personal narratives include a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning of a narrative includes an introduction. The following parts are typically included in an introduction of a narrative:

- **Theme:** In the introduction, the writer may tell what the essay is about (the central idea, theme, or message). The author also may provide a clue as to how he or she feels about the experience.
- **Hook:** The introduction also includes a hook to get the reader interested and motivated to read more. Writers can use a variety of different ways to introduce their personal narratives and hook their readers, including foreshadowing (a hint of something to come), action, dialogue, character description, or setting description.

The introduction usually sets the tone or reveals the writer's attitude toward the experience described in the essay. To establish the tone of the essay, the writer thinks about the effect he or she wants the essay to have on the audience (e.g., to laugh, cry, or share the pleasure of a special time or place). The introduction also establishes why the essay is worth reading.

6. Interesting Details

Personal narratives include interesting, specific details that add substance and contribute to the writer's portrayal of the experience. Interesting details that appeal to the senses and describe what is happening instead of merely telling the facts or listing the actions draw readers into the story. These details provide the reader with a clear understanding of why an experience is meaningful and help the reader to visualize the experience. Readers may vicariously experience the feelings of the characters (and the narrator) and even feel like they are there. As a result, readers connect with the writer's personal experience and reactions to it.

Writers develop the details or events relating to the personal experience most effectively when they use a "show, don't tell" approach. In other words, writers elaborate and add concrete and specific description, action, and dialogue as they re-create scenes from their experience. This type of writing results in readers clearly picturing what is happening (the scene).

For readers to understand the import of the essay topic, it is imperative that writers reflect on what they thought or felt at the time. Writers should provide plausible motivations for their behavior or actions and reveal any changes or insights that developed as a result of their experience.

7. Logical Sequence

In personal narratives, the writer uses organizational strategies and/or literary devices (story elements) to communicate the importance or meaning of the experience. The organizational structure supports the central idea (message, theme). The writer presents the events in a logical sequence or meaningful order. The most common organization for personal narratives is chronological order.

The organization is often similar to the plot line of a story. Like stories, personal narratives typically include an introduction, a plot, characters, a setting, a climax, and a conclusion. Personal narratives often build to a climax or resolution of a problem (usually resulting in personal growth for the author).

Some authors may organize their personal narrative by developing a sequence of events. However, writers should not just list events and then conclude the essay with a lesson learned or an explanation of how the story related to the author's life. To ensure that readers have a clear understanding of why an experience was and is meaningful, the changes, insights, and/or lessons learned should be evident throughout the essay.

The writer should also use meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections to enhance the logical movement of the narrative and reinforce the link between the experience and its meaning. Transitional words and phrases show the relationship of ideas and events. Transitions connect events and move the reader smoothly through the story.

8. Strong Conclusion

Personal narratives require a strong conclusion. The conclusion should leave readers with a lasting impression of the personal experience and insight (new or deeper understanding of the experience). The conclusion should also give readers a sense of closure and completion.

Conclusions can include a strong action, feeling, or image that shows the author's personal growth and/or emphasizes the importance of the event.

9. Purposeful and Precise Word Choice

The writer's word choice in a personal narrative should be accurate, concise, clear, and concrete. Effective word choice enables the writer to re-create the personal experience in a way that conveys its importance or meaning. Writers often focus on word choice to improve their first drafts.

Examples of how word choice can improve writing include the following:

- Replacing overused words with stronger, more powerful ones
 - Action verbs
 - Adjectives
 - Adverbs
- Inserting phrases and figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors) that describe, explain, or provide additional detail and connections

10. Varied Sentence Structure

Sentences are the building blocks of writing. The ways sentences are constructed affect the fluency or the flow of the writing. Personal narrative essays are enhanced when the writer uses purposeful sentences that are varied in both length and structure.

Examples of how writers can vary sentences to improve their writing include the following:

- Using a variety of sentence patterns
 - Combining short sentences with prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, or participial phrases
 - Combining short sentences by linking items of equal importance with a coordinating conjunction
 - Combining short sentences that contain ideas of unequal importance with a subordinating conjunction
- Varying sentence beginnings
 - Beginning with an adverb
 - Beginning with a phrase (e.g., prepositional, participial, or infinitive)
 - Beginning with an introductory clause
- Breaking up long, rambling sentences (often run-on sentences) into two or three shorter sentences

Personal Narrative Elements Mini-Chart

1. Narrow, clearly defined focus
2. Character descriptions
3. Dialogue
4. Setting description
5. Strong introduction
6. Interesting details
7. Logical sequence (does not need to be chronological)
8. Strong conclusion
9. Purposeful and precise word choice
10. Varied sentence structure

Using Mentor Texts to Identify Personal Narrative Elements

Personal Narrative Elements

“Tights and Camo” By Brock Clarke

Central idea:
Skiing helps the
author maintain
peace in his
relationship with
family member.

I grew up in a small mill town just south of the Adirondack Mountains, and although I live in Maine now, for many years I lived in places where it didn't really snow, and I would look forward to my trip home for the holidays, when I would go cross-country skiing with my dad. “Look forward” is a bit misleading; “pay obsessive attention to the snow report while ignoring everything else” might be more accurate.

The main reason for my snow obsession had something to do with the end of the world; never mind about that. The other reason is that I missed my father, and when you miss your parents, the more you try to express it, the more likely you are to get into an argument with them—but it's nearly impossible to get into an argument with your father while you're both cross-country skiing.

I didn't go skiing with my dad last year—he was sick (he's better now, thank you)—and so my wife agreed to go with me in his place, mostly because I begged her. This was Christmas Eve. We were in the deep woods, in deep snow; it was beautiful, and perfectly quiet and empty—until, that is, we heard the baying of dogs and gunshots. A few seconds later, we saw a guy walking toward us. He was wearing camo and holding a gun.

When I see a guy walking toward me holding a gun, I want to turn and run, or turn and ski. But in this case my masculine pride prevented me from doing so, although my masculine pride had not prevented me from wearing ski tights and a hat with a fuzzy ball on top. Anyway, the guy got to within a few feet of us, and before he or I could say anything, my wife blurted out, “You get any deer?”

My wife grew up in New Jersey and doesn't exactly keep tabs on the length of the deer-hunting season in upstate New York, so she had no idea that she'd inadvertently accused this stranger with a gun of being a poacher, which he might well have been. Which was why I then said, loudly and idiotically, “Ha, ha, of course he's not hunting deer!” And then, rather than ask him what he was hunting (if it wasn't deer, it had to be rabbits, unless it was humans), I said, “Cold, isn't it?”—again, idiotically, because it wasn't all that cold and because his camo pants were certainly insulated and for that matter so were my tights.

"Naw," the guy said. "It was 10 below in Speculator last week." Then he eyed me, over his beard (his beard was red and covered every bit of his lower face until just an inch under the eyes), and asked, "You know where Speculator is?"

I did know where Speculator was—an hour north of where we were standing. I'd been there many a time. And so I said, "I know exactly where Speculator is!" This must have sounded as suspect to him as it sounds to me now, because he said, "Well, you ever been to Bungtown?"

I had not been to Bungtown. I had never even heard of a place in upstate New York with that name. But I was too busy establishing that even though he had a gun and I was wearing tights, I had been to just as many really cold places as he had. So I said, "Yeah, yeah, I've been to Bungtown."

"It's cold there, isn't it?" the guy said, grinning now.

"Sure is," I said. "Really cold."

He and I had a good laugh over how cold it is in Bungtown, and then he said his goodbyes and strode away. I watched him go, feeling pretty good about the whole exchange, watched him until he turned into the woods and disappeared. I imagined him finding his dogs, who had found the animal he shot before running into my wife and me. I imagined him putting his dogs and the dead animal into his truck and then driving home. And then I imagined him telling his family about getting this guy in the woods to say he'd been to a place that doesn't exist called Bungtown. I imagined my wife telling the same thing to my family when we got home, and all of them having a big laugh at my expense, and me having a good sense of humor about it and then not and getting ticked off and eventually getting into an argument about something else, anything else.

Strong conclusion:
The conclusion leaves readers with a lasting impression of the significance of the experience. Skiing helps the author maintain peace in his relationship with family member.

I turned to face my wife, to begin the inevitable process. But she was already 100 yards away, skis kicking, poles poling. "That's exactly what my dad would have done, too," I thought, and then set off after her, putting as much distance as I could between us and whatever we might have argued about had we not been skiing.

Source: Clarke, B. (2011, February 6). Tights and camo. *The New York Times*, p. MM50. Reprinted with permission.

Using Model Sentences to Teach Conventions in Context

Use the mentor text “Tights and Camo” by Brock Clarke to complete the following instructional practices for noticing and imitating model sentences to teach conventions in context.

Teaching Dialogue

Notice

1. Identify a model sentence for dialogue.
2. Jot down what you notice: What works? What is the effect? What does the punctuation do? What changes if it is removed?

Imitate

3. Look closely at the model sentence. Deconstruct the sentence—underline the prominent features, including the dialogue.
4. As a visual scaffold, write a sentence pattern or frame that imitates the model sentence’s structure and use of dialogue (especially for English language learners and students with learning disabilities).
5. Write an original sentence that uses the sentence pattern and dialogue to show students how to insert their own ideas and experiences.

Teaching Strong Action Verbs

Notice

1. Identify a model sentence for strong action verbs.
2. Jot down what you notice: What works? What is the effect? What does the punctuation do? What changes if it is removed?

Imitate

3. Look closely at the model sentence. Deconstruct the sentence—underline the prominent features, including the strong action verbs.
4. As a visual scaffold, write a sentence pattern or frame that imitates the model sentence's structure and use of strong action verbs (especially for English language learners and students with learning disabilities).
5. Write an original sentence that uses the sentence pattern and strong action verbs to show students how to insert their own ideas and experiences.

Source: Anderson, J. (2007). *Everyday editing: Inviting students to develop skill and craft in writer's workshop*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Handouts

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts

Gateway Resource TPNT0002

Teaching Personal Narrative Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TPNT0002

Prewriting and Planning Personal Narratives

Prewriting and Planning Personal Narratives is the second online resource in the Teaching Personal Narrative Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: <http://writefortexas.org>. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Personal Narrative Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Prewriting and Planning Personal Narratives** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Prewriting and Planning Personal Narratives has three sections. The suggested time to complete all three sections is 35 minutes. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Brainstorming Ideas

- **Online activity handout, classroom teacher handout, and classroom template:** Prewriting Graphic Organizers (Handout 32)

Review the handout.

Tip: Model and teach students, over several class periods, how to use the graphic organizers to plan and prewrite a personal narrative. Include multiple opportunities for students to practice with guidance and support. Provide copies for students to use.

- **Online practice activity and video:**
 - Refer to Handout 32 as you watch the video.
 - After the video, brainstorm ideas for a personal narrative that you will write. List ideas for two or three of the categories on page 1 of Handout 32.



Section 2. Narrowing the Focus

- **Online practice activity and video:**

- Refer to Handout 32 as you watch the video.
- After the video, complete the second graphic organizer, Narrowing the Focus of an Idea, which is on page 2 of Handout 32. First, select one brainstorming idea (on page 1) that is important to you. Then, list specific details about your experience and select one to write about.

Section 3. Developing the Central Idea

- **Online practice activity and video:**

- Refer to Handout 32 as you watch the video.
- After the video, complete the third graphic organizer, Developing the Central Idea of a Personal Narrative, which is on page 3 of Handout 32.

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Prewriting Model Lesson (Handout 33)

Review the handout. Notice that it presents the key ideas from the model lesson in a different format from that shown in the videos.

Tip: Use the sample model lesson as a guide to help you plan and teach the prewriting strategies on Handout 32.

Prewriting Graphic Organizers

Brainstorming Chart for Personal Narratives

List ideas based on your own experiences.

Special Places, Trips, or Vacations	Trials and Tribulations	First Time or Day
Triumphs or Proud Moments	Friendships	Family Traditions
Growing Up	Mistakes	Other Ideas

Narrowing the Focus of an Idea

Brainstorming Idea. *Select one brainstorming idea that is really important to you.*

List and Choose. *List specific things that you remember about this experience. Then read over your ideas. Pick one memory to write about and place a check mark in the corresponding box.*

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Developing the Central Idea of a Personal Narrative

Narrowed Focus and Topic. *Write your singular, significant event or experience here.*

Important Details. *Visualize what happened. List several important details. Focus on your feelings, thoughts, and impressions.*

Significance. *What is the significance (importance) of this event or experience? What was its effect on you then and/or now?*

Central Idea. *Write the central idea of your personal narrative. The central idea should include the singular, significant event and why it is important or meaningful to you.*

Prewriting Model Lesson

Brainstorming Chart for Personal Narratives

Today we will begin writing a personal narrative. A personal narrative is about an event or experience in the writer's life that is important to the writer.

To help you think of some possible personal narrative topics, let's use the Brainstorming Chart for Personal Narratives to brainstorm some ideas.

Distribute copies of the chart. Display the chart on a projector.

The categories on the chart can help us recall experiences from our past. First, I will read each category on the chart. Then, I will start adding my ideas related to some of the categories.

Read the categories.

I have an idea for a personal narrative about family traditions. Every holiday season, my family and our neighbors look at holiday lights. Everyone squeezes into a van for our annual drive. I will write this idea, "look at holiday lights," in the Family Traditions category.

Have one or two students share ideas about their own family traditions. Tell students that they can add the ideas to their charts.

I also have an idea about a class trip to the museum. I think I will add this idea in the category Special Places, Trips, or Vacations. I will write "class trip to museum" on my chart.

Does anyone else have an idea for this category?

Ask one or two students to share their ideas. Continue to model and think aloud to brainstorm a few more ideas and then add them to your chart.

Now it is time for you to brainstorm some ideas for your chart. Write as many ideas as you can, but you do not have to include an idea for every category.

After approximately 5 minutes, have students share with a partner one or two of the ideas on their chart.

Narrowing the Focus of an Idea

Now you have some great ideas for topics of personal narratives. Remember, personal narratives should have a narrow focus or topic, rather than a large one. When you write a personal narrative, it is important to narrow your topic or focus before you begin writing.

Let's use the Narrowing the Focus of an Idea graphic organizer to help us narrow the focus of one of our ideas.

Distribute copies of the graphic organizer. Display the graphic organizer on a projector.

I will model how this graphic organizer can help me narrow my focus for one of the brainstorming ideas on my chart.

I first select one brainstorming idea that is really important to me. I write “class trip to museum” on my chart.

Now I will list specific things that I remember about this experience.

Write “long bus ride to city,” “lots of exhibits,” “picnic lunch at the park,” “IMAX movie,” and “the snake on the bus” on the graphic organizer.

Now I have some specific events from our class trip to the museum. I need to select which narrowed focus I will write about. I think I will write about the snake on the bus. I will place a check mark in the box in front of “the snake on the bus.”

Now look over the ideas on your brainstorming chart. Select an idea that really matters to you and write it on your graphic organizer. Then, tell your neighbor which idea you chose.

Allow 5 minutes.

Now you are ready to narrow your focus. List specific things that you remember about your experience. When you are finished, select the one that you want to write about. Place a check mark in the box in front of it.

Allow time for students to complete their graphic organizer. Have several students share.

Developing the Central Idea of a Personal Narrative

Narrowing the focus is important, but before you start writing, you also need to develop the central idea of your personal narrative. Let’s use the Developing the Central Idea of a Personal Narrative graphic organizer to help us determine the central idea.

Distribute copies of the graphic organizer. Display the graphic organizer on a projector.

First, I will write my narrowed focus on the chart: “the snake on the bus.” To develop a central idea, I need to visualize, or picture in my mind, exactly what happened. I will list these important details on the chart as I remember them.

List on the chart: “first-year teacher,” “field trip to the museum,” “halfway home with an hour more to go,” “several girls scream,” “snake is somewhere on the bus,” “Eric caught a grass snake at the picnic in the park,” “snake escaped from Eric’s backpack,” “everyone had to get off the bus,” “searched for 45 minutes,” and “found it hiding inside a paper bag under my seat.”

Now I need to consider the significance or importance of this experience and think about its effect on me then and now. Well, I will never forget this experience because it was both scary and funny. It also taught me a valuable lesson. I learned that, as a teacher, I should never assume anything and should always be prepared for the unexpected. I should always clarify expectations, including what qualifies as a souvenir!

Using this information, I know precisely what my personal narrative will be about. I will write the central idea on my chart.

Write: "Be prepared for the unexpected and clarify expectations for out-of-town field trips."

Let me check. Does my central idea include the singular, significant event I chose to write about? Yes, I am writing about finding a snake on the bus when coming home from an out-of-town field trip. Does my central idea include why it is important or meaningful to me? Yes, it states that I learned to be prepared for the unexpected and to clarify expectations.

Now develop the central idea for your personal narrative. First, write your narrowed focus on the chart.

Pause and monitor as students write their narrowed focus on the chart.

Now try to visualize what happened that day. List on the chart several important details that you remember.

Monitor and provide support as students list details. Allow 5 minutes.

Before you write your central idea, think about the following questions listed on your chart: What is the significance (importance) of this event or experience? What was its effect on you then and/or now? Then, discuss these questions with your partner.

Allow 2 minutes.

Now, on your chart, write the significance or importance of this event and its effect on you then or now.

Monitor and provide support.

You are ready to develop the central idea of your personal narrative. On your chart, write the central idea. Try to include the singular, significant event that you will write about and why it is important or meaningful to you.

Monitor and provide support. Have several students read their central ideas.

Handouts

Teaching Elements of Personal Narrative Texts

Gateway Resource TPNT0003

Teaching Personal Narrative Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TPNT0003

Drafting a Personal Narrative

Drafting a Personal Narrative is the third online resource in the Teaching Personal Narrative Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: <http://writefortexas.org>. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Personal Narrative Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Drafting a Personal Narrative** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Drafting a Personal Narrative has two sections. The suggested time to complete both sections is 1 hour. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Drafting an Introduction

- **Online practice activity and video:**

- As you watch the first video, refer to Handout 32 (your completed prewriting graphic organizers from the previous resource, Prewriting and Planning Personal Narratives [TPNT0002]).
- After the video, reread the central idea you wrote on page 3 of Handout 32.

- **Online activity handout and classroom teacher handout:** Drafting an Introduction Model Lesson (Handout 38)

Read page 1 of the handout. Notice that the handout presents key ideas from the model lesson in the videos.

- **Online practice activity and video:**

- Watch the second video. Think about the tone of your personal narrative and the effect you want it to have on readers.
- Read Section 3 (page 2 of Handout 38) to learn more about different ways to “hook” readers. Think about what kind of hook you want to try in your essay.

- **Online activity handout:** Personal Narrative Essay Draft 1 (Handout 39)
 - After watching the third video, write an introduction for your personal narrative on Handout 39. Remember to introduce the central idea, set the tone, and include a hook.
 - When you are finished, take a few minutes to review all of the key ideas from the model lesson on Handout 38. Think about how you will model and teach a similar lesson to your students.

Section 2. Finishing the Draft

- **Online practice activity:**
 - Have available the following handouts: Personal Narrative Elements (Handout 34) from TPNT0001, Handout 32 (your completed graphic organizers) from TPNT0002, and Handout 39 (your drafted introduction) from Section 1 of this resource.
 - Reread the introduction you wrote on Handout 39. You may want to revise it. Then, finish drafting your essay on Handout 39. Incorporate the details you listed in the third graphic organizer on Handout 32.
 - As you write, pretend you are modeling an actual lesson for your students. Focus on your thought processes and how you include the key elements of personal narratives (on Handout 34).
- **Teaching journal question:** Think about this writing experience. What has been its effect on you and the way you will teach writing?

Record your responses, ideas, and other thoughts in your teaching journal.

Drafting an Introduction Model Lesson

Section 1

We have been learning about personal narratives. Turn to your partner and discuss the following question. What is a personal narrative?

Allow 1 minute. Ask students to respond to the question. (Answer: A personal narrative is a true story about an event or experience in the writer's life that is important to the writer.)

We have brainstormed ideas, narrowed the topic or focus, and written the central idea for a personal narrative. Now it is time to start writing our own personal narratives.

Personal narratives include a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning of a narrative includes a strong introduction. Today we will learn how to write an interesting and strong introduction.

We previously completed the Developing the Central Idea of a Personal Narrative graphic organizer. Find your graphic organizer.

Pause while students locate the organizer.

This organizer helped us to develop a central idea by visualizing, or picturing in our minds, exactly what happened during this experience. Remember, the central idea tells the reader what the essay is about. The central idea may also provide a clue as to how you, the author, feel about the experience.

Do you remember the central idea of my personal narrative about the snake on the bus during a class field trip? My central idea is: "Be prepared for the unexpected and clarify expectations on out-of-town field trips."

The introduction of your personal narrative should include the central idea that you wrote on the graphic organizer. Do *not* include all of the details listed on the graphic organizer. These details will help you sequence and develop the body paragraphs in the middle part of your personal narrative. Write "body" next to the list of details.

Section 2

The introduction usually sets the tone or reveals the writer's attitude toward the experience. To establish the tone of the essay, the writer thinks about the effect he or she wants the essay to have on the audience—for example, to laugh, cry, or share the pleasure of a special time or place.

The tone of my essay about the snake on the bus will be light and humorous. I want my readers to laugh as they read about my experience.

Think about the central idea of your personal narrative. What effect do you want your personal narrative to have on the reader? Turn and talk with your neighbor.

Pause for several minutes. Have two or three students share their ideas.

Section 3

A strong introduction also needs a hook to get the reader interested and motivated to read more. Let's look at some of the ways that authors have started their narratives and tried to hook their readers' interest.

Distribute or display the following examples or examples from your grade-level anthology. Have volunteers take turns reading the examples.

Foreshadowing (a hint of something to come)

It was the time of year Farmer Bailey liked best, when summer turned to fall. He whistled as he drove along. A cool breeze blew across his face through the truck's open window. Then it happened. There was a loud thump.

(The Stranger by Chris Van Allsburg, p. 274)

Action

A storm was approaching, but Peter crawled through the strange little hole in the fence anyway.

(Time Traveler by Dan Simmons, p. 189)

Dialogue

"Bet you can't jump over that rille, Runt," Vern challenged. Gary Kandel hated it when his brother called him Runt. "Watch me, Runt," Vern taunted. "I'll show you how to do it."

(Moonwalk by Ben Bova, p. 614)

Character Description

Reba Jo loved to twang her guitar and sing while the prairie wind whistled through the thirsty sagebrush.

(The Horned Prince by Jackie Mims Hopkins, p. 94)

Setting Description

As they entered the camp, the longest shadows Marven had ever seen stretched across the snow, and he realized with a start that the shadows were the lumberjacks walking in the moonlight. He could smell hay and manure and saw silhouettes of horses stomping in a snowy corral.

(Marven of the Great North Woods by Kathryn Lasky, p. 218)

Look back over the list of ways to hook readers. Think about which one you would like to try when you begin writing your introduction. Turn and discuss which hook you want to use in your personal narrative.

Pause for several minutes. Have two or three students share their ideas.

Section 4

Now it is time to begin drafting an introduction for our personal narratives. I will show you how to establish tone and incorporate a hook as I draft the introduction for my personal narrative about the snake on the bus. I think that I will begin with some dialogue and foreshadowing to hook my readers.

“Help, Ms. Smith! There’s a snake on the bus!” These are words that no first-year teacher wants to hear. But I did.

I think I would want to read more. Do you? I have given readers a hint of what is to come. I also used dialogue to tell exactly what was said when one of my students discovered the snake. Now I will include the central idea of my essay in the other sentences.

There was no doubt that my first out-of-town field trip was about to teach me a valuable lesson: Be prepared for the unexpected and clarify expectations on out-of-town field trips. It’s too bad that my college professors had not covered these important principles before I landed my first job in the classroom.

I have added more information about the experience and included my central idea. Let me read the entire introduction:

“Help, Ms. Smith! There’s a snake on the bus!” These are words that no first-year teacher wants to hear. But I did. There was no doubt that my first out-of-town field trip was about to teach me a valuable lesson: Be prepared for the unexpected and clarify expectations on out-of-town field trips. It’s too bad that my college professors had not covered these important principles before I landed my first job in the classroom.

Now it is your turn. Write the introduction for your personal narrative. Your introduction should include the central idea that you previously developed. It should also set the tone by determining the effect you want the essay to have on your readers (laughter, sadness, etc.). And finally, your introduction should include a hook to interest readers and motivate them to read more.

Monitor and provide support as students write their introductions. Refer students to the Personal Narrative Elements handout and the section on a strong introduction.

Read your introduction to yourself.

Pause.

Read your introduction to your neighbor.

Allow 2 minutes.

Source: Portland Public Schools. (2014). *Narrative writing: Personal narrative*. Retrieved from <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/curriculum/G4WritingBinderInsert.pdf>

Personal Narrative Essay Draft 1