

Personal Narrative - Introduction

In this unit, students will have the opportunity to write a personal narrative. A personal narrative is a piece of writing that recreates an experience based on your own experiences and can communicate a main idea or lesson learned.

The seventh grade state writing assessment includes a narrative prompt. It will be important to give seventh grade students an opportunity to write a narrative, however, this does not preclude 6th and 8th grade teachers from teaching the narrative essay as well. All of the writing traits: ideas and content, organization, sentence fluency, voice, word choice, and conventions can be taught through the narrative essay.

The first lesson in this unit begins with brainstorming. In order for students to write an effective narrative they must be allowed to write about something that is important to them. Because a good story includes many elements such as setting, conflict, character description, dialogue, showing versus telling, and non-verbal and verbal communication, lesson plans have been written which will allow you to teach these essentials. Lessons on how to begin and conclude the narrative are also included in this unit.

Many of the lessons in this unit will ask you to use a variety of mentor texts to teach the elements of a narrative essay. These mentor texts may include your own writing, essays written by former students, published authors, stories from the EMC, and/or essays written by the students currently in your classroom. Giving students an opportunity to see a variety of narrative essays will help them as they write their own essay.

If you have students in your classroom who are strong narrative writers there are ways to challenge them with their writing. Have the student include more challenging literary elements in their essay such as flashback or metaphors. Students can also write more sophisticated dialogue. There are also a variety of places where students can send their work for possible publication.

For struggling writers make sure they are given time to plan what they will write. They need to feel confident with their topic. Struggling writers also need to know they don't have to include all of the narrative elements in their story. Students may focus on setting description and character description. Or they can focus on setting description and dialogue.

Personal Narrative: Brainstorming List – Grade 6

Teaching Point(s):

- Brainstorm personal narrative ideas

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- Lined paper, writing notebook, and/or journal
- Handout: *Ideas for Expanding your Brainstorming List*
- Student examples, if possible
- Teacher made example of brainstorming ideas (Yes, you should do the assignment first)
- Overhead or document camera

Connection:

“Because we will be writing personal narratives I want you to remember that YOU ARE YOUR OWN BEST STORY. Keeping a brainstorming list of story ideas helps you be more organized, productive, and focused as a writer. It’s a constant reminder of who you are and what you know and care about. I will ask you to revisit your brainstorming list throughout the year so you can add more ideas.”

Modeling (I do):

Make sure you have completed your own brainstorming list prior to lesson. Then say: *“I’m going to talk you through my own brainstorming list and while I’m sharing my ideas if you are reminded of ideas from your own life, feel free to write them down in your journal. Once I’m finished sharing my ideas, you will have 10 minutes to continue your brainstorming. After that you will pair-share your ideas.*

(As you share your ideas give anecdotal information and/or background information for why you think these are good ideas for personal narratives.)

Guided Practice (We do):

After you have finished sharing your teacher ideas, explain:

“When you are pair sharing, select which of you will be the ‘A’ partner and which will be the ‘B’ partner. A’s will share first, and then B’s will share. While you are listening to your partner’s ideas, listen for (and take notes, if it helps you keep track of ideas) three ideas you will share out with the whole class. You will tell everyone the title of your partner’s ideas and then give a little bit of background information on it. As you hear students’ ideas, feel free to add to your own brainstorming list.

Independent Practice (You do):

After students have shared, say: *“Now that you’ve all heard how rich our lives are, let’s take some time to do a bit of free writing. Select ONE of the ideas from your brainstorming list and do a quick write (later on I may ask you to try to write two pages on this topic.)”*

Either as homework or in class the next day given students the *Ideas for Expanding your Brainstorming List Handout*. Ask students to consider the items on this handout to deepen the list they started previously.

Closure:

You could ask students to take that beginning idea of writing to a final piece or you could ask them to select a different idea from their list to then bring to a finished piece of writing.

Using the brainstorming list to jump-start any personal narrative piece allows students to understand that they all have stories worth telling. This lesson also shows students a productive way to brainstorm any narrative piece.

Assessment – Check for Understanding

- Ask students to give you a thumbs-up if they wrote down 7 to 10 brainstorming ideas today.
- Ask students to turn in their quick write just to get a general idea of where students’ writing levels are.
- Monitor pair shares for understanding of directions and on-task behavior during the sharing.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Atwell, Nancie. Lessons that Change Writers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

IDEAS FOR EXPANDING YOUR BRAINSTORMING LIST

Consider the following ideas as you continue to add items to your personal narrative brainstorming list.

- Early childhood memories
- Elementary memories
- Obsessions (bands, stuffed animals, clothing, sports teams)
- First experiences
- Idiosyncrasies (things unique to you, habits you possess)
- Dreams, hopes, goals
- Things that confuse you
- Passions (dance, music, theater, friends, food, books, the environment)
- Sorrows (disappointments, friend experiences that went wrong, death)
- Risks taken
- Accomplishments
- Fears (real or imagined)
- Worries
- Fantasies
- Family (immediate, distant, friends, folks close to your family who are “like” family)
- Friends then and now
- Popular trends
- Things that you used to like or were a favorite of yours
- Pets then and now
- Teachers, substitutes then and now
- Places: school, camp, trips, your bedroom, times away from home
- Hobbies
- Sports (groups you’ve been involved with)
- Playing games
- The arts (music, dance, theater, visual art forms)
- Novels and/or writers
- Movies
- Pet peeves (social justice)
- Beloved items – objects and possessions – now and then
- All the loves of your life
- Historical events you’ve experienced
- Accidents you’ve experienced
- Holidays
- Confrontations (family, friends, teachers, neighbors)

Personal Narrative: Openings

Teaching Point(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write effective openings for personal narrative
Standard(s): CC.1.4.6.O CC.1.4.6.P CC.1.4.6.Q
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative Openings handout• Variety of narrative stories from former students (ones with a variety of different openings) – If you don't have your own, ask other teachers in your building for samples.• Individual student's <i>working writing folder</i>
Connection: <i>"How important do you think the beginning of a story is?"</i> Give students a chance to respond. <i>"Have you ever started to read a story and stopped because it didn't grab you? We will be working toward writing openings that will support your stories and hook the reader."</i>
Modeling (I do): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pass out Narrative Openings handout.• Go over each example together. Ask students why they think the example fits the type of opening it is.• Now share a former student's work and ask class to identify the type of opening the student used.
Guided Practice (We do): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify topic of sample work (student's story referenced above) and discuss WHY you think s/he selected that choice for an opener based on the topic. For example, a story that is about a fright someone had with a little brother would make for a good dialogue opening because it starts the story during the action – more lively. Another example might be a story about a grandfather, so beginning the story with character description because the story is about a person might be a better choice.• Not all of these openings will work for every story. Students may need to experiment with different options until they find the one that best fits their particular story. <p>Note: If a student plans to use the dialogue opening, it is advised that you inform them that they will need more than two lines of dialogue. Otherwise they will be tempted to revert into telling versus showing the action.</p>

Narrative Openings

SNAPSHOT (or setting) – This opening creates a picture or a “snapshot,” for the reader. Usually the snapshot is a silent photo – one that describes the setting.

Example:

The scent of pine from the tree hung over the living room. Heaps of shredded wrapping paper lay strewn across the Oriental rug. The ornaments and lights on the tree sparkled cheerily, while outside the sky was a dull whitish gray. Through the window we could see the bare trees shivering and bending in the wind outside. Leaning against the wall behind the festive Christmas tree was a long, thin package wrapped in brown paper. It was the last present yet to be opened and scrawled on the brown paper was my name.

Another example:

I touch the bitter cold knob of Grandma’s front door. I open it and go right to the heart of the house. It’s where Grandma’s heart is, too. I walk in to see the cream-colored walls and dark brown cupboards filled with 10-year old tools. They are not your tools, but the ones that Grandma uses. The ones she uses to fill your stomach, and puts her heart into. They are her cooking tools in the small kitchen. The kitchen is at least 40 years old with its beige Frigidaire and ancient oven. Despite all of the newer appliances she prefers the old ones with character.

CHARACTER – This opening puts the character in focus.

Example:

She’s coming, I thought to myself. Lean, tall, bleached blonde hair, long flawless nails, fluorescent makeup, wild conspicuous cheetah print outfit, pearly white long buckteeth, heavy makeup, and about 160 pounds was walking over to me. Her perfume was so intense that I could taste it.

Another example:

Grandpa is the king of the sea. He is always relaxed and clam, ready to fish. He may be old, but he’s always ready to pull in that thirty pounder. Grandpa will sit for hours patiently waiting for a bite. I admire those big calloused and scratched hands that have done so much; and the head with not too much hair left on top. Going fishing with Grandpa is always so much fun if you can learn to be patient.

SHOCKING OPENING – In this opening, the writer surprises us, sets up a mystery, and makes us want more.

Example:

The blue tights, the tight blue shirt with a large red “S” on it, the red cuffs at the feet and the large, yellow cape with a large red “S” on it – the “S” stood for Superman. This was my Halloween costume – when I was 13. I can’t really explain why I chose this costume, maybe it

was because I remembered when I used to love Superman as a little kid, or maybe it was because I had never had a Superman costume as a kid, but for whatever reason I chose Superman. Little did I know that Superman was not exactly what I should have chosen for that October 31.

Another example:

Chapman Elementary was the same that morning as I walked up the even cement steps. Rust covered the brown heavy front doors as always. Wax shone throughout the front hall. Mrs. Dougan's first grade classroom looked unchanged, with equations written with white chalk on a green chalkboard. That day everything seemed the same – but me ...

DIALOGUE – In this opening, the writer jumps right into the scene, letting us land in the middle of a movie.

Example:

“I’m bored,” I said, rolling my eyes.

“Bored like a 2 x 4,” Taylor chuckled, laughing at his own joke.

“Why don’t you ask your mom if she can think of anything for us to do,” Will said, naively.

“Are you kidding?” Taylor said. “Never ask your mom what to do.”

“Yeah, I can hear her now.” I put my hands on my hips and began talking in a high-pitched tone of voice like my mom. “You’re bored? Well, I can think of something for you to do. Why don’t you rake the leaves, mow the lawn, wash the car, and paint the house!”

“Never mind!” Will said, smacking me with a paddle that was lying on the ping-pong table.

“Put that away,” I shouted. It goes in the closet over there, the one with all of the board games in it. You might have to move the baseball gloves. Actually, put it on the shelf with the basketballs and footballs, right next to my Game Cube.”

“Man, there is nothing to do here,” Will whined.

“Why don’t we look in the garage,” Taylor said with a mischievous look in his eyes.

“Yeah, maybe we can find something to do there,” I said.

We headed for the garage.

Another example:

“Come on Lizzie. It’s about to start,” said Maddie as we ran up the carpeted stairs and through the double doors.

“I’m coming already, but I still can’t believe I forgot my gloves,” I said, shaking my head when we got to the ballroom.

“Tough luck for you,” I heard Maddie snort.

“Hey! You forgot them last week, so don’t laugh,” I retorted, getting in line behind Maddie.

“Sorry, but you still have to dance and guys have sweaty hands.”

“Don’t rub it in,” I said, sticking my tongue out at the back of Maddie’s blonde head.

Personal Narrative: Setting

Teaching Point(s):

- Writing effective setting description for personal narrative

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- Black Whiteness: Adm. Byrd Alone in Antarctica, Bridges to Lit., Level III, pg. 426

Connection:

“The setting of the story gives the reader an idea of the place and time in which the story takes place. We read other writer’s stories so we can understand and see how authors describe and share the setting of the story. The setting could be revealed through weather, scenery, dialogue/dialect, landscape, and time. The setting gives the reader knowledge about the time period, geographical location, and/or the cultural environment. Today we’re going to read a story from our literature book.”

Modeling (I do):

“Let’s see how the author creates a picture in our mind of the setting of the story through time, dialogue, and scenery.”

Read the first page of the story.

Guided Practice (We do):

After reading the first page of the story have students pull out the setting graphic organizer. Together as a class find examples from the first page of the story. “How do we know when and/or where our story takes place?” As students share their ideas discuss as a class and have students enter the examples in their graphic organizer.

Continue reading the story as far as you want or feel the need to read. Continue to find examples, as a class, of setting description. Students write the examples in their graphic organizer and as a class discuss how they know these are examples of setting description.

After finding examples as a class, students could work with a partner and continue to read the story and find setting examples with their partner. Partners could share out examples of setting with the rest of the class.

Independent Practice (You do):

“We’re going to get out the narrative rough draft we’ve been writing. Re-read what you have written so far. After reading your story, close your eyes and ask yourself: Where is the story taking place? What does it look like? What does it smell like? What time of day is it? What season is it? Once you’ve thought about the setting of your story and visualized it, on the next clean sheet in your writing notebook, write down words and phrases that describe where your story takes place. For example, does your story take place at the beach during the summer? Could you write “The hot summer sun beat down on our tanned arms as we dug in the wet sand.” Once you’ve written examples of setting description in your notebook, go back to your narrative rough draft and begin to find places in your story where you can add these setting description ideas. Think about time, scenery, dialogue, and location of your story.”

Closure:

“With your partner, read what you wrote today. Can your partner figure out where the story takes place? When? Other setting details? If your partner does not know where the story takes place, discuss with your partner two places in your story where you could add setting description then add it to your story.”

Assessment – Check for Understanding

Assessment will be anecdotal as you walk through the classroom listening to partners share their stories. Writer’s workshop will also allow you to check for understanding. Students can also fill out an exit card with one sentence of their revised setting description.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Setting description graphic organizer.
Bridges to Literature – Book Level III

Personal Narrative: Point of View – Grade 6

Teaching Point(s):

- Compare first person and third person point of view in narrative writing
- Revise personal narrative for point of view

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- *Working student writing folder* containing personal narrative drafts
- Pen or pencil
- “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros – handout
- “The Marble Champ” by Gary Soto - handout

Connection:

“Today I’m going to read two children’s books, each from a different point of view (POV). What is POV?” (Take a few answers from class.)

“What do you think the difference might be between the POVs?” (Take a few answers)

Point of view is the author’s choice of a narrator for his story. You as a reader get different kinds of information from a story depending upon who is telling the story. There are three major points of view.

- **First person:** the narrator is a character in the story and can reveal his/her own thoughts and feelings and what s/he is told by other characters.
 - (First person uses I, me, my, we, us)
- **Third person:** the narrator is an outsider who can report only what s/he sees and hears – like a newspaper reporter.
 - (Third person uses he, she, they, them)
- **Omniscient:** the narrator is all-knowing (omniscient) and can enter the minds of one or more of the characters.

Modeling (I do):

As I read these examples (see text choices above in materials section), I want you to listen for point of view. You’ll be paying attention to the pronouns used – for example, “I” or “he” or “she,” AND thinking about what kind of information you get from each different point of view. Consider which story allows you to know what someone is thinking? Which story makes you imagine what someone is thinking, or why someone is doing something.

After reading, guide a discussion toward understanding that the reader is allowed more personal access to the character when the first person is used, and must infer much more when third person is used. If you share a selection using omniscient POV, continue discussion, pointing out the impact of allowing the readers to know what one or more characters are thinking and doing.

Then discuss which POV would best tell your narrative essay.

You may also want to discuss the usage of past versus present tense.

Guided Practice (We do):

Read the story “*Eleven*.” Ask the students what POV the author used. Why do they think the author used first person?

Notice the use of pronouns in the story. Have students find examples of first person POV.

This would be a good time to take our former students’ narrative essays. Put them up on the overhead and ask the students to tell you which point of view was used in the story.

Direct students to write the narratives in the first person.

Notice the difference between present and past tense (may be a separate lesson).

Independent Practice (You do):

Have students get out their essays and edit them for discrepancies in point of view and past and present tense.

Closure:

Have students turn to a partner and share examples of where they changed either point of view or the past/present tense.

Assessment – Check for Understanding

Exit note: Have students show you one sentence from their narrative that was in first person that they changed to third person.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Eleven

By Sandra Cisneros

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, you're not . . . Not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says, "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, "Now, Rachel, that's enough," because she sees I've shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it's hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don't care.

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not—"

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn't eleven, because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren't mine.

That's when everything I've been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I'm not. I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's a cake Mama's making for tonight, and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

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The Marble Champ

Lupe Medrano, a shy girl who spoke in whispers, was the school's spelling bee champion, winner of the reading contest at the public library three summers in a row, blue ribbon awardee in the science fair, the top student at her piano recital, and the playground grand champion in chess. She was a straight-A student and—not counting kindergarten, when she had been stung by a wasp—never missed one day of elementary school. She had received a small trophy for this honor and had been congratulated by the mayor.

But though Lupe had a razor-sharp mind, she could not make her body, no matter how much she tried, run as fast as the other girls'. She begged her body to move faster, but could never beat anyone in the fifty-yard dash.

The truth was that Lupe was no good in sports. She could not catch a pop-up or figure out in which direction to kick the soccer ball. One time she kicked the ball at her own goal and scored a point for the other team. She was no good at baseball or basketball either, and even had a hard time making a hula hoop stay on her hips.

It wasn't until last year, when she was eleven years old, that she learned how to ride a bike. And even then she had to use training wheels. She could walk in the swimming pool but couldn't swim, and chanced roller skating only when her father held her hand.

"I'll never be good at sports," she fumed one rainy day as she lay on her bed gazing at the shelf her father had made to hold her awards. "I wish I could win something, anything, even marbles."

At the word "marbles," she sat up. "That's it. Maybe I could be good at playing marbles." She hopped out of bed and rummaged through the closet until she found a can full of her brother's marbles. She poured the rich glass treasure on her bed and picked five of the most beautiful marbles.

She looked out the window. The rain was letting up, but the ground was too muddy to play. She sat cross-legged on the bed, rolling her five marbles between her palms. Yes, she thought, I could play marbles, and marbles is a sport. At that moment she realized that she had only two weeks to practice. The playground championship, the same one her brother had entered the previous year, was coming up. She had a lot to do.

To strengthen her wrists, she decided to do twenty push-ups on her fingertips, five at a time. "One, two, three . . ." she groaned. By the end of the first set she was breathing hard, and her muscles burned from exhaustion. She did one more set and decided that was enough push-ups for the first day.

She squeezed a rubber eraser one hundred times, hoping it would strengthen her thumb. This seemed to work because the next day her thumb was sore. She could hardly hold a marble in her hand, let alone send it flying with power. So Lupe rested that day and listened to her brother, who gave her tips on how to shoot: get low, aim with one eye, and place one knuckle on the ground.

"Think 'eye and thumb'—and let it rip!" he said.

After school the next day she left her homework in her backpack and practiced three hours straight, taking time only to eat a candy bar for energy. With a popsicle stick, she drew an odd-shaped circle and tossed in four marbles. She used her shooter, a milky agate with hypnotic swirls, to blast them. Her thumb had become stronger.

After practice, she squeezed the eraser for an hour. She ate dinner with her left hand to spare her shooting hand and said nothing to her parents about her dreams of athletic glory.

Practice, practice, practice. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. Lupe got better and beat her brother and Alfonso, a neighbor kid who was supposed to be a champ.

The day of the championship began with a cold blustery sky. The sun was a silvery light behind slate clouds.

She signed up and was assigned her first match on baseball diamond number three.

Lupe, walking between her brother and her father, shook from the cold, not nerves. She took off her mittens, and everyone stared at her thumb. Someone asked, “How can you play with a broken thumb?” Lupe smiled and said nothing.

She beat her first opponent easily, and felt sorry for the girl because she didn’t have anyone to cheer for her. Lupe invited the girl, whose name was Rachel, to stay with them. She smiled and said, “OK.” The four of them walked to a card table in the middle of the outfield, where Lupe was assigned another opponent.

She also beat this girl, a fifth-grader named Yolanda, and asked her to join their group. They proceeded to more matches and more wins, and soon there was a crowd of people following Lupe to the finals to play a girl in a baseball cap. This girl seemed dead serious. She never even looked at Lupe.

The other girl broke first and earned one marble. She missed her next shot, and Lupe, one eye closed, her thumb quivering with energy, blasted two marbles out of the circle but missed her next shot. Her opponent earned two more before missing. She stamped her foot and said “Shoot!” The score was three to two in favor of Miss Baseball Cap.

Lupe then earned three marbles and was set to get her fourth when a gust of wind blew dust in her eyes and she missed badly. Her opponent quickly scored two marbles, tying the game, and moved ahead six to five on a lucky shot. Then she missed, and Lupe, whose eyes felt scratchy when she blinked, relied on instinct and thumb muscle to score the tying point. It was now six to six, with only three marbles left. Lupe studied the angles. She dropped to one knee, steadied her hand, and shot so hard she cracked two marbles from the circle.

“I did it!” Lupe said under her breath. She rose from her knees, which hurt from bending all day, and hugged her father. He hugged her back and smiled.

Everyone clapped, except Miss Baseball Cap, who made a face and stared at the ground. Lupe told her she was a great player, and they shook hands. A newspaper photographer took pictures of the two girls standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with Lupe holding the bigger trophy.

Lupe then played the winner of the boys’ division, and after a poor start beat him eleven to four.

The head referee and the President of the Fresno Marble Association stood with Lupe as she displayed her trophies for the newspaper photographer. Lupe shook hands with everyone, including a dog who had come over to see what the commotion was all about.

Back home, in the privacy of her bedroom, she placed the trophies on her shelf and was happy. She had always earned honors because of her brains, but winning in sports was a new experience. She thanked her tired thumb. “You did it, thumb. You made me champion.” As its reward, Lupe went to the bathroom, filled the bathroom sink with warm water, and let her thumb swim and splash as it pleased. Then she climbed into bed and drifted into a hard-won sleep.

“The Marble Champ” from *BASEBALL IN APRIL AND OTHER STORIES*,
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Elements of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Handout

Verbal Elements

- Volume (loud, soft)
- Melody, pitch (high, low)
- Pace (speed)
- Tone (emotional quality, attitude)
- Enunciation (clear, mumbled)

Nonverbal Elements

- Eye Contact
- Facial Expression
- Gesture (meaningful motions of arms and hands)
- Posture (position of body)
- Proximity (distance from other characters or objects)

NOTE: Please add examples of each (or have students do so) to make this handout more useful.

Personal Narrative: Ensuring the Narrative has Conflict

Teaching Point(s):

- Write personal narrative that includes a conflict

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- Diagram – handout
- Individual student’s *working writing folder*
- “The Three Little Pigs” by Joseph Jacobs - handout

Connection:

Ask students/have a discuss:

“Have you ever read a story with no plot? Was there really no plot or was the story just boring? What makes for a good plot? What makes for a boring plot?”

Define plot –

“A plot is a series of events related to a central conflict or struggle. The structure of a plot is based on an author’s choice of events related to that conflict and the order of those events.”

Teacher could record ideas and/or definition and project them, or write on board.

Modeling (I do):

Put a blank plot chart on your blackboard or document camera. As a class, label the parts of a plot on the chart.

“Because you are all writers your personal narrative will need to have a plot. Just because it happened to you doesn’t mean you can write about it!”

(Meaning: not everything that happens to you is worthy of a story because there’s not always a conflict involved.)

Guided Practice (We do):

Read “*The Three Little Pigs*” out loud. After finishing the story, as a class, plot out the story. What is the conflict? The turning point? The resolution? What are the most important parts for the rising action, which lead to the turning point and the most important parts of the falling action which lead to the resolution? Make sure students understand that the resolution fixes the

conflict.

Read as many children's stories as necessary.

ELL/SpEd/Struggling Learners: Reading the story aloud will benefit students in their understanding of plot. You may also wish to give students a copy of a blank plot chart for their own story.

TAG: Depending on the topic a student selects, s/he could include more than one conflict.

Independent Practice (You do):

Ask students to get out their personal narrative draft. Have students ask themselves:

- Do you have a conflict?
- What is it?
- What is your turning point and what leads to it?
- What is your falling action and how does it lead to the resolution?
- Does the resolution fix the conflict?

If students can't answer these questions, they need to begin to work on rewriting so these questions are answered. If necessary, give a blank plot chart.

Closure:

Have the students find a partner and answer the above questions or read one another's stories and locate the above items within stories.

Assessment – Check for Understanding

Stories will contain a plot and conflict.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

"The Three Little Pigs"

by Joseph Jacobs

Once upon a time there was a mother pig with three little pigs.

Because they were growing up quickly and it was getting harder to care for them, she sent them into the world to earn their fortunes.

The first pig to leave home met a farmer in the fields with a bundle of straw.

"Please, sir," said the First Little Pig to the Farmer. "Give me that straw so I can build a fine home."

So the Farmer gave the First Little Pig some straw, and he built himself a house.

One day, a Wolf came along to the door of the First Little Pig's straw house.

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in," said the Wolf, knocking.

"Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin," replied the First Little Pig behind the locked door.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he blew the house in.

Then the Wolf ate the First Little Pig.

The next pig to leave home met a Woodsman in the forest with a bundle of sticks.

"Please, sir," said the Second Little Pig to the Woodsman. "Give me those sticks so I can build a nice home."

So the Woodsman gave the Second Little Pig some sticks and he built himself a house.

Then along came the Wolf to the Second Little Pig's house of sticks.

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in," said the Wolf.

"No, no, no!" replied the Second Little Pig. "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed.

And at last the Wolf blew the house down then ate the Second Little Pig.

Now the Third Little Pig met a Carpenter in town with a load of bricks.

"Please, sir," said the Third Little Pig to the Carpenter. "Give me those bricks so I can build a great home."

So the Carpenter gave the Third Little Pig some bricks and he built himself a house.

And so the Wolf came to his house, as he had done with the other pigs.

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in," said the Wolf.

"No, no, no," replied the Third Little Pig. "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed.

And he puffed and he huffed, and he huffed and he puffed.

But the Wolf could not blow down the Third Little Pig's solid brick house.

"Little pig," said the Wolf, "I know where there's a field of turnips.

The Third Little Pig asked: "Where?"

"In Mr. Smith's garden. Tomorrow morning I'll call at six o'clock and we'll go dig up some dinner."

"Very well."

Next morning the Third Little Pig rose at five.

He went to Mr. Smith's garden, dug up the turnips, and was home before six.

When the Wolf came at six he asked, "Little Pig, are you ready?"

"Ready!" he replied. "I have gone to Mr. Smith's and come back, and have a pot-full for dinner!"

The Wolf was now terribly angry for having been tricked by the Third Little Pig.

"I'm going to eat you little pig," shouted the Wolf. "Here I come down the chimney to get you!"

So the Wolf found a ladder and climbed up to the little pig's roof.

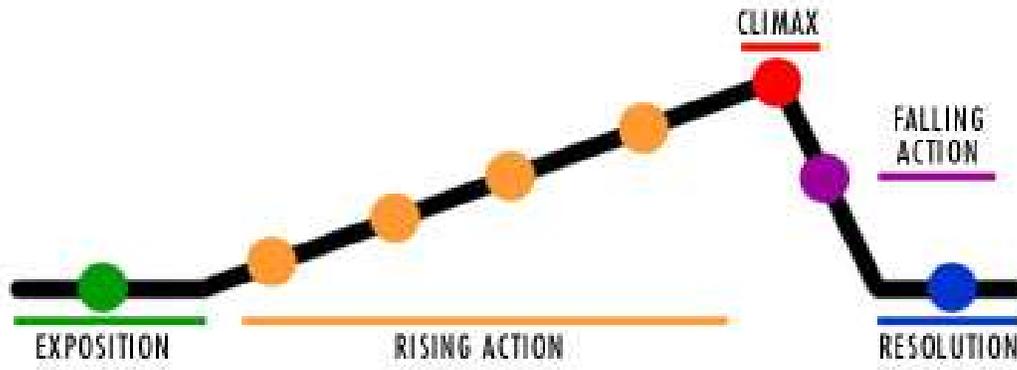
Meanwhile the Third Little Pig lit a blazing fire beneath the pot of turnips and water in the fireplace.

Then just as the Wolf came down the chimney the little pig took off the cover and the Wolf fell in.

Into the pot fell the wolf, with a big splash. And that was the end of the wolf. And so the Third Little Pig slammed on the cover and cooked up a pot of Wolf and turnip stew. The third little pig was too clever for him, and lived happily ever after.

Plot Diagram Assignment

Create a plot diagram using events from the story you have been reading. This diagram needs to include both words and pictures. See example



Exposition –setting, characters, main conflicts are introduced to the reader; this is the beginning of a novel or story and may be short or long, but is always flat (little action or emotion).

Rising Action - the round characters are developed, the conflicts are increased and acted out in many ways, motives are introduced, things happen; generally, the major part of a novel or story. Include at least five major events from the story

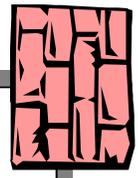
Climax - the "high point" of a story in which the major conflicts erupt in some kind of final showdown (fight, argument, violent or physical action, very tense emotional moment...); at the end of the climax, the "winner" will be clear (there is not always a winner!). This is the point in the story where something CHANGES.

Falling Action - what events immediately follow the climax; a kind of "cleaning up."

Resolution/Denouement - where everything ends; the reader may have some sense of "closure" or may be asked to think about what might come next; in fairy tales, the Happy Ending; in some novels, you will read about the characters many years later.

Rising Action

Falling Action



CLIMAX: Wolf gets frustrated and jumps down the chimney to get pig #3.

Event #7
Wolf tries to trick pig #3 to come out of house.

Event #6
Big Bad Wolf can't blow down brick house.

Event #5
Pig #3 builds house of bricks.

Event #4
Big Bad Wolf blows house down and eats pig #2.

Event #3
Pig #2 builds house of wood.

Event #2
Big Bad Wolf blows house down and eats pig #1.

Event #1
Pig #1 builds house of straw.

RESOLUTION: Pig #3 cooks and eats Big Bad Wolf for revenge.

Wolf falls into boiling pot over fire.

PLOT DIAGRAM EXAMPLE

The Three Little Pigs

EXPOSITION:
Three little pigs leave home for the first time.

Personal Narrative: Show Don't Tell – Adding Description

Teaching Point(s):

- Use sensory details and clear language in personal narrative
- Focus on word choice

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- Show Don't Tell Sentence Activity (part one)
- Show Don't Tell (part two)

Connection:

When writing your narrative you want to show the reader what is happening – not tell the reader what is happening. For example, if you're writing a story about a fight with your mom don't tell me, "I fought with my mom." Actually show me the fight through the dialogue. Don't tell me you went to the beach for spring break, show me through the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and your feelings what going to the beach was like.

Modeling (I do):

- Pass out the handout on Show Don't Tell
- Model the first sentence for the class by rewriting it to include showing detail
- As a class, select a sentence and have students orally suggest how it might be changed to include details
- Write students' suggestions for all to see

Students can add details through:

- Setting description
- Character description
- Dialogue
- Internal monologue
- Figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification)
- Flashback

Guided Practice (We do):

- Have students work on handout together in small groups
- Select one sentence per group to share with whole class – after they have rewritten it

Independent Practice (You do):

- Direct students to get out their narrative and comb their paper line-by-line looking for opportunities to SHOW rather than tell it.

-

Closure:

“Turn to a partner and share three changes you’ve made to your draft.”

Assessment – Check for Understanding

- Make sure all students have shared at least one sentence from the handout prior to working on their own narrative.
- Exit slip – have students define in their own words what showing versus telling does for their writing.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Christensen, Linda. Reading, Writing, and Rising Up. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2000.

Wasson, Shannon, Teacher, da Vinci Arts Middle School, 2009.

SHOW DON'T TELL SENTENCE ACTIVITY, part one

Directions: Rewrite each sentence so they SHOW the detail versus just telling it. Try NOT to use the words AM, IS, ARE, WAS, WERE, and THERE. Instead use action verbs. Proofread to get rid of AND unless it's absolutely necessary.

1. She was an ugly witch.
2. The house (car) was dilapidated.
3. S/he was dressed weird.
4. The child was having a tantrum.
5. My room was a mess.
6. It would take a lot of work to clean up the yard.
7. The dog was funny looking.
8. I could tell the little boy/girl was spoiled.
9. The mean looks terrible.
10. S/he was gorgeous.
11. The kids were making fun of him/her.
12. She was embarrassed.
13. It was a peaceful place.
14. S/he was exhausted.
15. It was a stormy night.
16. The player hit a home run.
17. It was a great play when he caught the pass and made a touchdown.
18. The goal she scored made everyone excited.

SHOW DON'T TELL, part two

Some fantastic ideas to help you SHOW DON'T TELL in your own writing. Think about using this worksheet when you sit down to edit your own writing.

- What did the person's face look like – the eyes, the set of the jaw, the smile or the frown, the tenseness of the facial muscles, etc.?
- What sounds could be heard?
- What smells can you relate to the moment?
- What feelings were present? Was the moment smooth? Slick?
- Choppy,? Sticky? etc.?
- What movements come to mind when you visualize the moment?
- Describe the person's posture, hands, etc.?
- Was anyone else there? What did their faces look like in the moment? What words did they say?
- Were there any objects around? Were they affected? Were horses neighing, campfire crackling? Are there other details that contribute to the tone of the moment?
- If the moment was a color, what color would it be?
- If it were a thing, what would it be?
- If nature was the moment, how would you describe it? A storm, a sunrise, a gentle shower, a warm day in June, a field of wild flowers?

**There's so much more – KEEP THINKING!!! Get into the moment.
Make it come ALIVE!**

Personal Narrative: Punctuating Dialogue

Teaching Point(s):

- Punctuate dialogue correctly

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- Student copy of “Dragon, Dragon” text excerpt by John Gardner – handout
- Projection document
- Highlighters

Connection:

Ask: *“Ok, so when you’re reading a book how do you know who’s talking?”*

Hopefully your students will say something like: “there are marks around their words” or that “the words they are saying are indented.”

If you don’t get the answers you’re looking for, then ask: *“As a good reader how do you keep track of character’s conversations when you read a book? Now it’s your turn to use dialogue in the narratives you’re writing. As a write, it’s your job to help the reader of your work keep track of the characters in your story. This requires you to master the skills of punctuating dialogue.”*

Modeling (I do):

Project document with dialogue and ask students to tell you where they see punctuation in the first two sentences. Ask a student to come up and highlight what they see. *“Based on the punctuation that we just highlighted, give me a rule for the usage of this punctuation.”*

Guided Practice (We do):

Students will need to be in groups of 3 or 4 and they will highlight the remainder of the story looking for any punctuation they see. After that (still in small groups) they will need to come up with 5 to rules for the punctuation they identified.

Come together as a whole class. Project the text and have one group at a time come forward and define their punctuation rule. **THEY MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY CORRECT.** Therefore, as a class, try to come to the correct definition.

Do this until all groups have had an opportunity to share. **THEY MAY NOT FIND ALL OF THE RULES FOR PUNCTUATING DIALOGUE.** This is where you, as the teacher, may need to fill in the blanks for your students.

ELL/SpEd/Struggling Learners

Give students a list of the rules for punctuating dialogue and/or use children’s picture books during the highlighting portion of the lesson. This may make seeing and recognizing the punctuation easier.

TAG

Ask students to begin using more complex versions of dialogue. For example, “Young lady, get down here and clean up this mess in the kitchen,” my mom yelled, “before I ground you from using your cell phone for a week.”

Independent Practice (You do):

Students will go back through the dialogue in their own narratives and use the rules we covered in class.

Closure:

If you go home tonight to work on your narrative and you can’t remember all of the rules we covered today, always remember that you can use a novel as a source of information to remind you of the punctuation rules we covered in class today.

Assessment – Check for Understanding

Turn to a partner and share one sentence you punctuated today.

Before leaving class today have each student write you an *exit slip* defining one of the rules about punctuating dialogue they learned today that they didn’t previously know.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Personal Narrative – Mini Lesson – Dialogue

“Dragon, Dragon”

By John Gardner

Suddenly, to everyone’s surprise, the queen turned into a rosebush.

“Oh dear,” said the wizard.

“Now you’ve done it,” groaned the king.

“Poor Mother,” said the princess.

“I don’t know what can have happened,” the wizard said nervously, “but don’t worry, I’ll have her changed back in a jiffy.” He shut his eyes and racked his brain for a spell that would change her back.

But the king said quickly, “You’d better leave well enough alone. If you change her into a rattlesnake we’ll have to chop off her head.”

Meanwhile the cobbler stood with his hands in his pockets, sighing at the waste of time. “About the dragon . . .” he began.

“Oh yes,” said the king. “I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll give the princess’ hand in marriage to anyone who can make the dragon stop.”

“It’s not enough,” said the cobbler. “She’s a nice enough girl, you understand. But how would an ordinary person support her? Also, what about those of us that are already married?”

“In that case,” said the king, “I’ll offer the princess’ hand or half the kingdom or both— whichever is most convenient.”

The cobbler scratched his chin and considered it.

“It’s not enough,” he said at last. “It’s a good enough kingdom, you understand, but it’s too much responsibility.”

“Take it or leave it,” the king said.

“I’ll leave it,” said the cobbler. And he shrugged and went home.

But the cobbler’s eldest son thought the bargain was a good one, for the princess was very beautiful and he liked the idea of having half the kingdom to run as he pleased. So he said to the king, “I’ll accept those terms, Your Majesty. By tomorrow morning the dragon will be slain.”

“Bless you!” cried the king.

“Hooray, hooray, hooray!” cried all the people, throwing their hats in the air.

The cobbler’s eldest son beamed with pride, and the second eldest looked at him enviously. The youngest son said timidly, “Excuse me, Your Majesty, but don’t you think the queen looks a little unwell? If I were you I think I’d water her.”

“Good heavens,” cried the king, glancing at the queen who had been changed into a rosebush, “I’m glad you mentioned it!”

Personal Narrative: Sentence Fluency and Word Choice

Teaching Point(s):

- Edit for sentence fluency – passive language
- Edit for word choice – strong verbs

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O
CC.1.4.6.P
CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- *Sentence Fluency and Word Choice* handout

Connection:

“Now that you have a draft of your story, it’s time to tighten up some of your sentences. We’ll be using four different ways to improve your essay.”

Distribute the *Sentence Fluency and Word Choice* handout

Modeling (I do):

Explain and discuss each of the ideas for editing sentences.

First – students will go through their own papers and eliminate as many IS, WAS, WERE words as they can.

Guided Practice (We do):

After students have eliminated IS, WAS, WERE from their sentences and REWRITTEN the sentences, come together and SHARE the original sentence and the revised sentence. Repeat each of the other options on the handout.

ELL/SpEd/Struggling Learners

Have students focus mainly on the “flabby” word portion of the handout. Check for understanding before they leave class.

TAG

Ask students to show you multiple ways they can edit any given sentence.

Independent Practice (You do):

Continue with the editing phase using the options on the handout at home.

Closure:

Pair share, whole class share.

Assessment – Check for Understanding

Exit slip: Have students write one of their best sentences on a piece of paper at the end of class and hand it to you on their way out.

Teacher: Check for understanding and return to students the next day.

Reflection:

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Christensen, Linda. Reading, Writing, and Rising Up. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2000.

Sentence Fluency and Word Choice

Once you get the content down in your writing, you need to go back and tighten up those “flabby” sentences.

1. **Active Verbs:** The most typical problem in writing is weak verbs. We use “is,” “was,” and “were” and make them pull the weight of the sentence. Try to get rid of them.

Example: The garage was a mess. There were tools, boxes, and toys scattered all over the ground.

Rewrite: The messy garage had tools, boxes, and toys scattered all over the ground. (Hint: Who is doing the acting in the sentence? The word “there” often leads to flabby sentences.”

2. **Wordy Sentences:** These sentences contain fillers – words that add nothing but air. Flabby words!

The most common culprits are: I think, I feel, in my opinion. If this is your piece of writing, the reader assumes that you are giving your opinion unless you state otherwise.

Unnecessary words: really, very, always, about, stuff, totally, things, so, just, that, then, tons, well, bad, cool, good ...

Example: So it was a really cool birthday party because there were about nine kids there and totally good stuff to do which in my opinion is the best kind of party.

3. **Sentence Variety:** Vary the length of your sentences. Otherwise your reader is going to fall asleep with the redundant rhythm.

Example: Fiona and I had been fighting. Constantly. My mom’s brilliant plan was to take the three of us out sledding at Mt. Hood. We did this annually on MLK Day; mom would drive us to this secluded sledding hill and we’d spend the day together. But this year it seemed to be more of an intervention.

4. **Images:** Use poetic language in every type of writing. Good writing is filled with images – words and phrases that appeal to the senses. Use metaphors, similes, and personification.

Example: Her expressed scared me. Normally soft, oceanic eyes were now as hard as the ice coating the road.

Example: Soon we were curving into a parking lot, the gravel mumbling beneath the fat tires.

By Melanie Morris, West Sylvan Middle School

Sentence Variety Ideas



1. **–ing word group (participle phrase) at the beginning of the sentence:**

Sitting on the porch, the quiet, close-knit family watched the sun go down.

2. **–ing word group in the middle of the sentence:**

The quiet, close-knit family, sitting on the porch, watched the sun go down.

3. **–ing word group at the end of the sentence:**

The quiet, close-knit family sat on the porch, watching the sun go down.

4. **Adverb clause at the beginning of sentence:**

As the quiet, close-knit family sat on the porch, they watched the sun go down.

5. **Adverb clause at the end of sentence:**

The quiet, close-knit family sat on the porch in order to watch the sun go down.

6. **Adjective immediately following noun:**

The family, quiet and close knit, sat on the porch, watching the sun go down.

7. **Appositive (actual word that will serve as the appositive will have to be added):**

The quiet, close-knit family, the Smiths, sat on the porch, watching the sun go down.

8. **Noun followed by –ing word group (noun absolute):**

The sun having already gone down, the quiet, close-knit family sat on the porch.

Personal Narrative: Writing Good Endings

Teaching Points):

- Write effective ending for personal narrative

Standard(s):

CC.1.4.6.O

CC.1.4.6.P

CC.1.4.6.Q

Materials:

- *Types of Narrative Endings* handout

Connection:

“We’ve been working on a variety of ways to improve how we write personal narratives. Now that we’ve hooked our audience with a fascinating lead and a captivating story, you need a finish that comes full circle and satiates the reader.”

Modeling (I do):

“Let’s look at some examples of endings.”

With class, review *Types of Narrative Endings* handout.

Personal Comment Ending:

“Close with a personal comment or response to what you have written. It is not the same thing as an opinion. It is more like a personal conclusion you have reached or a lesson you have learned because of the experience you wrote about in your paper.”

Mystery Ending:

“Close with a statement that shows some things will never be resolved. However, be sure to do this in a way that the reader does not think you just forgot to end your story or paper. This ending should leave the reader wondering what will happen next.”

Note: This form of ending could be confusing to writers as they may inadvertently write a mystery instead of a narrative. Monitor its usage.

Full Circle Ending

“You can close your paper by revisiting the topic of your first paragraph at the end.”

Beginning of a new story

“When writing a story or personal narrative, you can close with a hint of things to come, or the beginning of a new story – a sequel of sorts.”

<p>Guided Practice (We do):</p> <p>Students will look at sample openings and closings (if you have some). If not, have students share their own work.</p> <p>Have students take one of the example endings and use it in their narrative.</p>
<p>Independent Practice (You do):</p> <p>Students will experiment with a few different types of endings and share them with a partner to decide which is the most effective for their particular narrative.</p>
<p>Closure:</p> <p>Give students an opportunity to share their ending choices and discuss why they think one is more effective than another.</p>
<p>Assessment – Check for Understanding</p> <p>Students will have selected effective ending that fits their narrative topic.</p>
<p>Reflection:</p>

Resources and References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Christensen, Linda. Reading, Writing, and Rising Up. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2000.

Ideas for Teaching Writing. Kim's Korner 4 Teacher Talk. 28 June 2009
<http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/writing/menu.html>

Morris, Melanie, Teacher, West Sylvan Middle School, 2009.

Types of Narrative Endings

Personal Comment Ending

Example: *Bringing more bread would not have solved our problem, because the ducks would never have had enough. In this case, instead of mice and cookies, the moral is if you give a duck bread, he'll ask for some more. Next time, when life wants to teach me a lesson, I'll just read the story.*

Mystery Ending

Example: *He was very embarrassed, and I didn't blame him for crying. I would have too if Mr. Dunn had treated me like Mark, and I feel today that the only reason he was so mean to Mark was because Mark was Native-American ... Mark never finished those scales that day, and he never came back again. I don't blame him for that either.*

(This student example is from Christensen, Linda. Reading, Writing, and Rising Up. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2000.)

Full Circle Ending

Example – two parts: opening and closing paragraph:

Opening Paragraph: *Grandpa is the king of the sea. he is always relaxed and calm, ready to fish. He may be old, but he's already ready to pull in that thirty pounder. Grandpa will sit for hours patiently waiting for a bite. I admire those big calloused and scratched hands that have done so much; and the head with not too much hair left on top. Going fishing with Grandpa is always so much fun if you can learn to be patient.*

Closing Paragraph: *I picked up the fish and put it in the wooden box halfway filled with river water. it was the box reserved only for fish we caught and were taking home – no exceptions. I gently laid the fish in the box treating it like a baby. Instantly I knew the answer to my question, it is always worth it to be patient.*

Beginning of a New Story:

Example 1: *The rest of the evening was more relaxed, even though the dishwasher did overflow, but that's a whole other story! I haven't quite trusted Cameron since that night, and I guess I never will.*

Example 2: *"Oh, don't worry, it'll be fine!" Mari said. Déjà vu. I sighed again and looked at Chloe. She turned to face me and stuck out her tongue innocently. I shook my head and swung my leg over the saddle. Chloe snorted happily at my defeat. We walked back to the arena's fence, and I made myself relax. Chloe's ears turned to face the road. I heard sputtering motors in the distance. Motorcycles, just my luck, I thought.*

Publishing Opportunities

www.wordshack.com

WordShack Publishing is a home for the world's amateur authors; a place to showcase their work, and to be discovered. Two individuals are directly responsible for all aspects of the site. They are Ben Bernstein of London, England and Lynda Blankenship of Massillon, Ohio in the United States.

www.teenink.com

Teen Ink is a national teen magazine, book series, and website devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos and forums. Students must be age 13-19 to participate, register and/or submit work. Distributed through classrooms by English teachers, Creative Writing teachers, Journalism teachers and art teachers around the country, Teen Ink magazine offers some of the most thoughtful and creative work generated by teens and has the largest distribution of any publication of its kind. The Young Authors foundation, Inc., is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that supports all Teen Ink publications.

www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resources/3138

The National Writing Project offers a collection of online publishing opportunities for student writing.

www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/basic/yngwrite.html

Noodletools offers a comprehensive list of publications which accept student submissions.

<http://www.artandwriting.org>

Sponsored by Scholastic, Inc., the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers offers opportunities for students in grades 7-12 to submit works to regional affiliates for publication.