

How to write a narrative



Name _____ Date _____

What is a narrative?

A narrative is a story or account of a time or event.

For example:

- An account of a holiday
- A diary of a day in your life
- An eye-witness account of an accident

Layout Features

Your narrative needs:

- A *title / main heading* which grabs the reader's interest and/or tells us what it's about.
- *Paragraphs*. Use a new paragraph when you talk about a different time, place, person, event or idea.

Show paragraphs by leaving one blank line. If you forget to leave a space, you can show paragraphs by adding these marks in front of the new paragraph: //.

Structure

Your narrative should usually be written in *chronological order*, which means, in the order it happened. For example, an account of a day in your life would start when you wake in the morning, and end when you go to sleep at night.

For Level 2, you might like to start a personal narrative at the most exciting part and then 'flashback' to the beginning.

Your narrative should have an obvious *ending or conclusion* e.g., the end of the day, the end of your involvement in an incident.

Use linking words and phrases to join your story together, e.g. later on, afterwards, the next day, meanwhile.

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Tense

Think about what *tense* you should use. It will normally be past tense. Check your verbs (doing or being words) to make sure you've used the correct tense. E.g., The phone *rang* and I *answered* it.

Formality

Your narrative could be *formal or informal*. Think about who your *audience* is – who will be reading your narrative? If you are emailing your friends to tell them about your holiday, use informal language. If you are writing an accident report for a manager, use formal.

Improving Your Writing

Use description to add detail and interest to your writing.

Use adjectives (words that describe people, places or things) e.g., purple, tiny, historic, spectacular.

Use the five senses: what did you

- see?
- hear?
- feel?
- smell?
- taste?

Fact or Fiction?

When writing a narrative for an exam, should you use real-life experiences or make something up? The choice is yours BUT if you make up a story, try to keep it believable - something that *could* have happened to you.

Now try it...

Now try one of the tasks on the next page.

Narrative writing task

Name _____ Date _____



1) Write a narrative with the title 'A Day I'll Never Forget'.

2) **Here's an example Level One exam task:

You have started a work placement for a company that sells VIP hot air balloon rides. One of your tasks is to go on the balloon ride and then write a description of the day out for the website, to help readers of the website understand what the experience is like.

Write approximately 250 words telling the story of your experience.

You should cover:

- how the day started
- how you felt before the balloon took off
- how you felt when high up above the ground
- what you could see
- the highlight of the day
- how the day ended.

***Source: Guidance for delivery. FS English Writing Level 1, City and Guilds, Jan 2020.*

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/skills-for-work-and-life/english-mathematics-and-ict-skills/4748-functional-skills#tab=documents>