Thoughtful Learning - Narrative Writing Grade 3

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **December**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

The Narrative writing unit focuses on telling a story. The narrative structure has a plotline. It can be fiction or nonfiction. In this unit students will develop an understanding of the different types of narratives, including personal narratives, family stories, realistic stories, time-travel fantasies, and tall tales.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will understand the elements of a story.
- Students will learn about the different types of narratives.
- Students will learn the importance of sensory details and specific verbs in narrative writing.

Essential Questions

What is narrative writing? What are story elements? How do I show not tell?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Writing Personal Narratives - Start - Up Activity

Ask your students, "What is the funniest thing that happened to you this week?" Have them share their stories. Encourage laughter. Point out how people enjoy hearing stories—especially funny, exciting, or spooky stories—about real events that happen to other people. Let students know that when they write down these real stories about their lives, they are creating personal narratives.

Sample Personal Narrative

Ask students if they have ever seen a wild animal and what animal they have seen. Ask them to tell

the story and make it exciting:

- Who was with you?
- What did the animal do?
- What did you do?

After a few students share, read aloud the sample personal narrative on page 86. Then discuss the story:

- What did you think the title was talking about?
- When did you have an idea what they were confronting?
- What was your favorite part of this narrative? Why?
- How did the writer use dialogue, actions, and descriptions?

You can also share with your students this animal-themed personal narrative or this animal-themed narrative paragraph.

A Closer Look at Narratives

Ask your students to close their eyes and listen closely. After a few moments, ask them to tell you what they can hear (raising their hands). Call on students one by one to tell about the sounds.

Have them keep their eyes closed and tell what they feel—with their fingers, with the soles of their feet, with their breathing. . . . Take more suggestions.

Then have them open their eyes and tell the most interesting thing they see.

Help students understand that we know things because of our five major senses: what we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. If we include those kinds of **sensory details** in our narratives, readers will be able to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the experience themselves. They will feel like they are living the experience!

Lead your students through the three main points on this page.

Explain also how **specific verbs** show readers what is happening rather than just telling them. And **dialogue** lets them hear the people in the narrative speak, as if they were in the same room.

Encourage students to use these kinds of details when they write their own narratives.

Writing a Personal Narrative

Lead your students through the prewriting tips on this page. Help them understand that the best events to write about mean something to them and offer them many memories to share.

After students choose a topic, have them list actions in order or draw a comic strip of what

happened to help them put ideas in order.

Family Stories - Start - up Activity - Traditions paragraph (Holidays Around the World)

Ask your students, "What stories do your family members tell? What is your favorite story about your family?" Have volunteers briefly tell their family stories.

Point out that family stories are fun to tell and to listen to. They help us share our lives together. Let your students know they will be writing about their favorite family stories.

Sample Family Stories

Read aloud the two family stories on this page. Point out how both stories have common ingredients:

- **People**
- **Place**
- **Action**
- **Dialogue**

Let students know that their own family stories should include ingredients like these.

You can also share with students this higher-level family story, which is sweet and sad: "Grandpa, Chaz, and Me."

Writing a Family Story

Have students read the eight subject areas under "Read and Remember" and think of family stories that relate to one of the areas. Have them choose their stories and list details, such as the people, place, actions, and dialogue.

When students are ready to start writing, lead them through the tips for creating a beginning and putting details in order.

Writing Realistic Stories - Start-up Activity

Tell your students a true story about something that recently happened to you. If you can't think of something, tell them this story:

> I went grocery shopping yesterday and was about halfway done. Then I remembered I forgot to get apples, so I left my cart and went to get apples. I returned with a bag of apples and put them in my cart and finished shopping. When I was checking out, I recognized the first few things I put on the belt, but after the apples, I didn't remember picking the other items. A woman came up behind me and said, "I think we got our carts switched." That was embarrassing!

After telling the story, ask what ways the story could be changed to be a made-up story, but still believable. (Answers include changing the people involved, describing specific purchases that were surprising, or even having the two people buy each others' groceries and not realize until they got home.) Let students know they will be doing the same thing with events from their own lives—turning them into realistic stories.

Sample Realistic Story

Help students understand that a realistic story is made up but could have happened. Often, true events can inspire the story.

Have volunteers read aloud each paragraph of the sample realistic story.

Afterward, return to the side notes to point out the main features of the story. Show students that this story starts with a character, gives a problem for the person, builds to an exciting detail, and then draws the story to a fun closing. Students' stories should follow a similar pattern.

Writing a Realistic Story - Author in Residence Stories

Have students list exciting, funny, or odd events from their lives and choose one such event as a starting point for their stories. Then have them think of ways they can make the event even more interesting as a made-up story. Help them understand the importance of giving the main character a problem to solve.

You can also use the related minilesson to help students fictionalize real events.

Writing a Fantasy

Have students start their fantasies by coming up with interesting **characters**. The characters could be themselves and their friends, or they could be completely made-up people. Let students know that they need to choose characters that readers will want to read about.

Next, have students come up with a **problem** that characters face. Have them write "Problems of _____(characters)_____" in the middle of a piece of paper and circle it. Then have them write possible problems in a cluster all around this central idea. Students should pick a problem that will challenge the characters and make the readers want to find out more.

Finally, help students think about interesting **locations** for their fantasies and **times** for the time-travel to occur.

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills

The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills lists three types:

Learning Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

Literacy Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Technology Literacy

Interdisciplinary Connections

These writing steps and skills can be utilized in science and social studies assignments. Students will write a traditions paragraph about their family traditions during holidays and is linked to the Holidays Around the World and Culture in Social Studies.

Differentiation

Modify expectations: Shorten or lengthen assignment depending on abilities.

Require basic or extended vocabulary.

Small group teacher instruction based on student's writing ability.

Pair students heterogeneously for centers to encourage students to learn from peers.

Allow for speech to text for longer writing assignments.

Provide choice extension projects as necessary to extend learning

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/writing-descriptions-show-instead-tell

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/starting-stories-5-great-beginning-strategies

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/writing-family-story-and-historical-marker

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/writing-5-w%E2%80%99s-story

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/writing-back-and-forth-stories

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/using-perspective-shifting-imagine-history

Modifications & Accommodations

Refer to QSAC, EXCEL SPED Accommodations spreadsheet in this discipline.

IEP and 504 accommodations will be utilized.

Formative Assessments

You can provide this formative assessment during different types of writing conferences:

- **Desk-Side Conferences** occur when you stop at a student's desk to ask questions and make responses. Questions should be open-ended. This gives the writer "space" to talk and clarify his or her own thinking about the writing.
- **Scheduled Conferences** give you and a student a chance to meet for 3 to 5 minutes in a more structured setting. In such a conference, a student may have a specific problem or need to discuss or simply want you to assess his or her progress on a particular piece of writing.
- **Small-Group Conferences** give you a chance to meet with three to five students who are at the same stage of the writing process or are experiencing a similar problem. The goal of such conferences is twofold: first, to help students improve their writing and, second, to help them become better assessors.

Summative Assessments

Decide which assignments require summative assessment, and then grade the writing following this process:

- Ask students to submit prewriting and rough drafts with their final drafts.
- Scan final drafts once, focusing on the writing as a whole.
- Reread them, this time assessing them using the qualities of writing.
- Make marginal notations, if necessary, as you read the drafts a second time.
- Scan the writing a third and final time. Note the feedback you have given.
- Complete your rating sheet or rubric, and, if necessary, write a summary comment.

Instructional Materials

Writer's Express Skills Book

Writer's Express Handbook

Standards

LA.RL.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
LA.RL.3.2	Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message/theme, lesson, or moral and explain how it is revealed through key details in the text.
LA.RL.3.3	Describe the characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the plot.
LA.RL.3.5	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
L.WF.3.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.
L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.W.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using narrative technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.W.3.3.A	Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.W.3.3.B	Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
LA.W.3.3.C	Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
LA.W.3.3.D	Provide a sense of closure.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.