**EFP 11 - The Narrative Essay **

# What is a Narrative essay?

* Narrative writing tells a story. In essays, the narrative writing could also be considered a reflection, or an exploration of the author's values and insight told as a story. The author may remember his or her past, or a memorable person or event from that past, or even observe the present.
* **When to narrate vs explain (Expository essay):**
	+ The prompt reminds you of an experience or set of circumstances of your own (experiential)
	+ The prompt reminds you of an important aspect of your past, an autobiographical incident that has special meaning (reflective)
	+ You have learned from an experience and the best way to show your ideas is through story
* **Choose ONE prompt for this essay. This will be your central theme in a narrative from your life:**
	+ ***Power affects relationships***
	+ ***Conflict influences one’s identity***
	+ ***Who gets to tell whose story? Restorying of the past.***
	+ ***How is identity reflexive and shaped by environment?***

# Basic qualities of a narrative essay:

* A narrative essay is a piece of writing that recreates an experience through time. It follows a logical sequence, so consider the best order to tell it.
	+ *Why Am I Not on StarTrek?*: Begins with a personal reflection of life as a child on a reserve and lack of representation in the media.. She uses humour to make her point.
* In addition to telling a story, a narrative essay also communicates an insight into life, **a lesson learned or a connection between your experience and the larger world.** Your beginning (or intro) may allude to it, but by the time you end your essay, your conclusion should contain this realization of what has been learned. Your thesis/purpose/insight can be implied or explicit.
	+ *Why Am I Not on StarTrek?*: – thesis statement: I’ve always felt pressure to tell “authentic” Native stories. I never knew exactly what was meant by that.
	+ **What insight or message will your narrative reveal for me? – the reader. What thesis statement might I write for your essay in the deconstructive (marking) process???**
* Narrative essays often begin with a single incident, revelation or style that sparks some reflection, similar to a hook in speeches.
	+ *Why Am I Not on StarTrek?*: *-*: she starts with her 4 year old realization that writing could be a career.
* Narrative essays contain elements of story structure, such as characters, setting, ***conflict*** etc.
	+ *ST:TNG:* person vs. self – Sonya had to come to terms with how to tell her story when the dominant culture may not have been ready to hear it.

“I faced a lot of racism growing up and was often made to feel that being a Cree Girl put me at a disadvantage in the world.”

* Narratives essays have a voice. This should be your voice. It is achieved through diction (word choice), syntax (manipulation of sentence structure for effect), and rhetorical and figurative devices. (see the handouts on rhetoric and the examples discussed in the essays)
	+ Sonya uses short sentences for emphasis; she uses a lot of repetition and rule of 3’s; she uses some emotive language and imagery; she uses some sound devices (it is a speech after all). She uses dialogue with self, but sparingly.
* Narrative essays appeal to the senses through descriptive language. **Show, don’t tell.** Don’t be greedy on details – use sensory words (words using your 5 senses), and vivid words (“my sister stood timidly on her puny tiptoes” or “the lines on my grandma’s face crinkled as she smiled at my goofy tiktok dance.”) to recreate an experience for your reader.
* Narratives have strong verbs – show events in action. Your narrative will be stronger if you **write in the present tense. Be IN the action.**
* Unlike other, more formal essays*, you may write in the first person* (I, me, we) because it is a story about YOU!

# Your assignment is to write a 2-3 page double spaced narrative essay.

1. **Reminder that the prompts are:**
	* ***Power affects relationships***
	* ***Conflict influences one’s identity***
	* ***Who gets to tell whose story? Restorying of the past.***
	* ***How is identity reflexive and shaped by environment?***
2. **Some steps to consider getting started:**
* Identify the experience or event that you want to write about – how will it address the prompt?
* What will be your opener/ narrative hook/ attention grabber?
* What is the narrative complication (conflict)?
* Think about why the experience is significant – insights and reflection?
* Spend a good deal of time drafting your recollections about the ***details*** of the experience. This is how you will make your writing lively and interesting in order to engage the reader’s interest. Add significant details and personal observations. Sharing personal thoughts and feelings will invite the reader into the writer’s world and make them care about the writer’s experiences.
* How will you establish voice and tone?
* How will you establish sequence? Create an outline of the basic parts or events.
* Where will you state your thesis? (it does not have to be at the beginning) Will it be implicit or explicit?
1. **Criteria:**
	* You must have a minimum of four examples where you manipulate your language for rhetorical effect (parallelism, rule of three, anecdote, figurative language, sentence manipulation etc. ***You must copy and paste the sentences, which contain your examples, to the bottom of the essay and label them.***
	* You must create sensory detail through descriptive language
	* Your essay must be a min of 750-1000 typed words (regular margins, font and spacing). Roughly two-three pages.
	* Your essay must have an interesting title that reflects your idea/s
	* Your essay will be marked on a 4-point rubric and is worth 30 marks (see below)
	* Post your assignment in TEAMS

Happy Writing!

Narrative Essay Rubric

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **10/9** | **8.5/8/7.5** | **7/6.5** | **6/5** |
| Ideas/Purpose | -A **unique** story that is shared using details that make the narrative truly memorable-**Purpose** is inferred or stated naturally | -An interesting experience is shared with details that help create the interest-Purpose is inferred or stated clearly | -The interesting experience needs more details -Purpose is stated explicitly but may not fit the story. OR may be confusing | -The narrative need to focus on one experience. Some details do not fit the narrative or it is missing details-Purpose is unclear  |
| Pacing and Plot | Pacing is ideal. Details enhance the plotFocus is on the purpose.  | Pacing is good.Enough details to enhance the plot but could use a bit more (or less) | Pacing is off. May need more details (or less) to fill in the “plot holes”  | Pacing is off. Too many plot holes |
| Organization | The organization makes the narrative **easy to read and enjoyable** | Organized well with a clear beginning, middle and end | The order of events need to be correctedTransitions may be weak or missing | Organization is confusing. Transitions weak or missing |
| Voice | The voice creates an **unforgettable experience**  | The personal voice creates interest. Possibly more dialogue is needed | The voice can usually be heard but may be a bit flat  | Voice is simple  |
| Word choice | Exceptional word choiceThe story is **shown** in **vivid details and imagery****Shown NOT told**  | Specific nouns, strong verbs and well-chosen modifiers create vivid pictures and express clear feelings. **Some *showing* as opposed to *telling*** | Some vivid language is used but may be overused or simple. **Story is *told*, not *shown*** | Little or no attempt at vivid language is used. Story is *told*, not *shown* |
| Sentence Fluency | The sentences are **skillfully written, varied, original and interesting****Effort to combine sentences and use short ones is obvious.**  | The sentences show variety and are easy to read and understand **Some effort to combine sentences correctly** | More variety in sentences are needed. Sentences may be awkward. **Combining sentences needs to be improved** | Too many awkward sentences that cause the reader to pause**Combining sentences needs to be improved** |
| Conventions | Grammar and punctuation are correct (**esp. semi-colons and colons**) -**Correct tense**  | The narrative has a few errors in punctuation, spelling or grammar-Correct tense  | The narrative has obvious errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar.-not in correct tense | Too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar-not in correct tense |
| Rhetorical Devices and Writing Techniques | Five clearly marked, correct examples **Examples are sophisticated and interesting**  | Five clearly marked, correct examples **Examples are good but may be basic**  | 3-4 clearly marked, correct examples **Examples are simple and clichés**  | Some examples of writing techniques**Examples are cliché**  |