

NARRATIVE ESSAY WRITING

WHAT IS NARRATION?

1. A narrative tells a story by presenting events in an orderly, logical sequence.
2. Narration can be the dominant pattern in many types of writing – formal, such as history, biography, autobiography, and journalism, as well as less formal, such as personal letters and entries in diaries and journals.
3. Narration is also an essential part of casual conversation, and it underlies tall tales, speeches and news and feature stories presented on television or radio.
4. In short, any time one “tells what happened,” he is using narration.
5. A narrative may be written simply to recount events or to create a particular mood or impression.
6. It also is written to prove a point by narrating a first-hand or else wise experience.
7. Narration is not simply telling a story, it also requires arrangement of details about the particular incident or event you are going to talk about.
8. Narrative writing may be part of an essay that is not primarily a narrative for example one may use narrative in argumentative essay or descriptive essay.
9. In other kinds of essay, when narrative is included, these paragraphs, though only a small portion of the essay, still have a definite purpose and are used to prove one’s point.
10. In such cases, however, the elements of the basic kind of essay (argumentative, descriptive).
11. The skills developed in narrative writing are also helpful in other kinds of writing. A process essay is like a narrative in that it outlines series of steps in chronological order.
12. A cause-and-effect essay also resembles narrative in that it traces a sequence of events.

A. What Is Narrative Detail?

1. Narratives, like other types of writing, need rich, specific detail if they are to be convincing. Each detail should help form a picture for the reader; even exact times, dates and geographical locations can be helpful.

2. The list of details makes the narrative genuine and convincing.

B. What is Narrative Variety?

1. Because Narrative is often told from one person's prospective, and because they usually present a series of events in chronological order, a constant danger is that all the sentences will begin to sound alike.

2. A narrative without sentence variety may affect readers to boredom.

3. This boredom can be avoided by varying the structures of the sentences e.g., by alternating sentence openings, inverting subject-verb order, or combining simple sentences.

C. What Is Narrative Order?

1. Many narrative present events in exactly the order in which they occurred, moving from beginning to end, from first event to last.

2. If one is writing a straight-forward account of a historical even, he needs to move efficiently from beginning to end.

3. In writing personal experience essays or fictional narratives, however, one may choose to engage reader's attention and interest by beginning with a key event from the middle of the story or even from the end, and then presenting the events that led up to it.

4. Starting into present and using a flashback to move into past may also be used but whatever the order is, it should shape and direct the narrative.

5. Verb-Tense is an extremely important clue in writing that recounts events in a fixed order because tenses show the temporal relationships of actions – earlier, simultaneous, later.

6. When one writes a narrative, he must be especially careful to keep verb tense consistent and accurate so the readers can easily understand the time sequence.

7. There are times when you must shift tense to reflect an actual time shift in your narrative. For example, convention requires that one use present tense when discussing works of literature. But a flashback to an earlier point in the story calls from present to past tense.

8. Nevertheless it is imperative to avoid unnecessary shifts in verb tense because this will lead to confusion in narrative.

9. Together with Verb Tenses, Transitions – Connecting words or phrases – are the most precise indicators of the relationships among events in time.

10. Transitions include first, second, next, then, later, at the same time, meanwhile, immediately, soon, before, earlier, after, afterwards, now and finally.

STRUCTURING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

1. Like other essays, narratives usually have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.
2. The thesis of an essay appears to be in introduction.
3. After the thesis, the body of the essay will recount the series of events that makes up the narrative, following a clear and orderly plan.
4. The conclusion will give the reader the sense that the story is complete, perhaps by repeating the thesis.

A. Introduction

- I. It may begin with a simple sentence or statement. This must show that the entire essay will be woven around this very idea.
- II. The introduction may also be able to move the readers smoothly into the main body without any interruption.
- III. Introduction is the beginning of the essay and is connected with the main body. To maintain the order of Narration, the transition from introduction to main body should be obvious but not unrelated.

B. Thesis

- I. Usually the thesis appears in the introduction. The thesis is again presented in the conclusion to ensure that the thesis is proved. In the main body, the events directly or indirectly may relate to the main thesis presented.

C. Structure.

- I. The body of an essay has to be well-structured both in order and variety. The balance of the essay should proceed in chronological order, working up to the climax or high point of the narration.

D. Detail

- I. To present an actual picture of the events, all the significant details are to be supplied and

presented.

II. Details should be limited to the context, no extra details be given lest it may confuse and divert the reader from the main idea.

E. Dialogue

I. The relationships between the characters of a narration can be shown via dialogues.

II. Dialogues are also important in presenting the first person view about the events.

III. Usage of indirect and direct speech in dialogues to create variety.

IV. Whenever a new character starts a dialogue, it should be convened by a new paragraph.

F. Sentence Variety

I. The sentences should be sufficiently varied to sustain reader's interest.

II. In this respect, monotonous sequences of uneven sentences be avoided and sentence openings should be varied.

III. Usage of small sentence structures should be avoided. Instead of two or three small length sentences, one single sentence should be used.

G. Verb Tense

I. Maintaining clear chronological order in events is very important similarly unwanted shifts in tense can confuse the readers.

II. The author should be careful to avoid unnecessary shifts in tense.

III. The necessary shifts are a must so one must do so wherever this is required.

IV. Along with Verb tense, Transitions should also be used effectively as time markers.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

WHAT IS DESCRIPTION?

1. Description tells what something or someone looks like.

a. As presented in the specimen example the writer uses and relies on sense impressions and

figurative language to paint a word picture of the Jungle in Ecuador.

2. Before the judgments about the world, before the comparison or contrast or classification of experiences, one describes what he observes.
3. Scientists observe and describe whenever they conduct experiments, and one does the same thing whenever he writes a paper.
4. EXAPMLE: In a comparison-and-contrast essay, for example, you may describe the performance of two cars to show that one is superior to the other.
5. EXAMPLE: In an argumentative essay, you may describe a fish kill in a local river to show that factory pollution is a problem
6. Through description you introduce your view of the world to your readers.
7. If the readers are in agreement with your point of view than they will be most likely be sharing and accepting your conclusion and judgment.
8. Therefore, it is imperative to make yourself good in description, and know what it takes to describe an effective description.

9. Narration V/s Description:

- a. A narration presents a series of events; it tells a story whereas a description tells what something looks like, feels like, sounds like, smells like or tastes like. (Sensual Description.)
- b. A narrative always presents events in time, in some sort of chronological order, whereas a description presents things in spatial rather temporal order.
10. Novelists, scientists and historians may portray by words the phenomena which they or we have never seen. (Imaginative Description.)
11. In a description, language is used to create a vivid impression to readers. That's why the descriptive details are used in narrations as well.
12. In support of an implied or explicit thesis, one may use description.
 - a. Writers often use an implicit thesis when they describe a person, place or thing.
 - b. This technique allows them to convey the narrative's descriptive impression²– the mood or quality that is emphasized in the piece of writing – subtly through the selection and arrangements of details.
 - c. Many writers use description to support an idea or assertion, however, many writers prefer to use an explicitly stated thesis.
 - d. This strategy eliminates ambiguity by letting readers see immediately what point the writer is making.
13. Whether the thesis is stated or implied, the details of your narrative essay must work together to create a single dominant impression.
14. In cases the thesis may simply be the statement of the dominant impression; sometimes, however, your thesis may go further and make a point about the dominant impression.

[Foot Notes: 1. The purpose of description is to re-create or visually present a person, place, event, or action so that the reader may picture that which is being described. Descriptive writing may be found in the other rhetorical modes.

2. Dominant impression in descriptive writing is the principal effect the author wishes to

create for the audience.]

I. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION

There are two basic approaches to description: objective and subjective.

1. OBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION

A. In an objective description, the focus is on the object rather than on one's personal reactions to it.

B. The purpose is to convey a literal picture of the subject.

C. Many writing situations require precise descriptions of apparatus or conditions, and in these cases the goal is to construct as accurate a picture as possible for the audience.

D. A biologist describing what he sees through a microscope and a historian describing a Civil War battlefield would both write objectively.

E. Newspaper reporters also try to achieve this camera-like objectivity, and so do writers of technical reports, scientific papers and certain types of business correspondence.

F. Indeed, objectivity is an ideal for which writers strive but never achieve.

G. Anytime writers select some details and eliminate others, they are not being completely objective.

H. Objectivity can be achieved to a level by giving all factual information to the readers which they need to visualize in the context.

2. SUBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION

A. Subjective or impressionistic description discloses your personal vision or your emotional responses to what you see and tries to get your readers to share them.

B. These responses are not necessarily expressed directly, through a straightforward statement of your opinion or perspective. Often they are revealed indirectly, through your choice of words and phrasing.

C. While describing a place or person, you could convey your subjective reaction to your topic by selecting and emphasizing details that show your feelings about the place or person.

D. A subjective or impressionistic description should convey not just a factual record of sights and sounds but also their meaning or significance. For example if you objectively described a fire, you might include its temperature, its duration, its dimensions. In addition, to these quantifiable details you might describe, as accurately as possible, the fire's color, its movement, and its intensity. If you subjectively describe the fire, however, you will include more than these unbiased observations about it. Through your choice of language and your phrasing, you would try to re-create for your audience a sense of how the fire made you feel: your reactions to the crackling noise, to the dense smoke, to the sudden destruction.

1. Neither of the two approaches to description exists independently. Objective description almost always contains some subjective elements, and subjective description needs some

objective elements to convey a sense of reality

2. The skillful writer adjusts the balance between objectivity and subjectivity to suit the topic, thesis, audience, purpose, and occasion of an essay.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE LANGUAGE

1. Both objective and subjective description depend on specific and concrete words to convey, as precisely as possible, a picture of the person, place, or thing that the observer is describing.

2. Both approaches however use different kinds of language.

OBJECTIVE

i. This description relies on precise, factual language that details your observation without including your attitude toward the subject.

ii. They describe things with words or phrases so unambiguous that many observers could agree that the descriptions were appropriate and exact.

SUBJECTIVE

i. This description, however, generally relies on richer and more suggestive language than objective descriptions.

ii. Subjective descriptions are more likely to rely on the connotations of words, their emotional associations than on their denotations, or dictionary definitions

iii. They may deliberately provoke the individual reader's imagination with striking phrases or vivid comparisons.

3. Although both kinds of description may use comparisons to evoke a subject, subjective descriptions rely more on elaborate or imaginative comparisons.

4. When you write subjective descriptions, you can compare two similar things.

5. Instead of comparing two things that are alike, you can find similarities between things that are unlike and provide a fresh view of both. Such special comparisons are known as figures of speech. Three of the most common are simile, metaphor and personification.

A. A simile compares two things that unlike, using like or as. These comparisons occur frequently in everyday speech, for example, when someone claims to be "happy as a clam," "free as a bird," or "hungry as a bear." As a rule, however, you should avoid these clinches in your writing. Effective writers constantly strive to use original similes.

B. A metaphor identifies two unlike things without using like or as. Instead of saying that something is like something else, a metaphor says that it is something else.

C. Personification endows animals or objects with the qualities of man beings. If you say that the wind whispered to, that the engine died, you are using personification.

6. Your purpose and audience determine whether you should use predominantly objective or subjective description.

7. Legal, medical, technical, business, and scientific writing assignments frequently require

objective description, but even in these areas you may be encouraged to tailor your descriptions so that they develop your own interpretations and arguments.

8. Still in all these instances your purpose is primarily to give your audience factual information about your subject.

9. In contrast, an assignment that specifically asks for your reactions demands a subjective or impressionistic description.

10. To produce an effective description, however, you must do more than just say something is wonderful – you must picture it as wonderful to the reader.

III. SELECTION OF DETAIL

1. All good descriptive writing, whether objective or subjective, relies heavily on specific details that enable readers to visualize what you are describing.

2. Your aim is not simply to tell your readers what something looks like but to show them.

3. Every person, place and thing has its special characteristics, and you must use your powers of observation to detect them.

4. Concrete words must be selected for conveying your dominant impression that will enable readers to see, hear, taste, touch or smell what the author describes.

5. For Example: The example of showing “He looked angry.” “His face flushed and one corner of his mouth twitched as he tried to control his anger.”

6. In a given description, not all details are equally useful or desirable. Only those that contribute to the dominant impression the author wishes to create should be included.

7. The number of details used is less important than their quality and appropriateness.

8. To avoid a seemingly endless list of details that blur the focus of your essay, you must select and use only those details relevant to your purpose.

9. The level and knowledge of your audience also influence the kind of detail that you include.

STRUCTURING A DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

1. When writing a descriptive essay, it begins with a brainstorming list of unorganized details, which you proceed to arrange in a way that supports your thesis and communicates your dominant impression.

2. For Example: The author may begin from a specific description of an object to a general description of other things around it or s/he can reverse this order.

3. The author can progress from the least important feature to a more important feature until s/he finally focuses on the most important feature.

4. The progress can also be from the smallest to the largest item or from the least unusual to the most unusual detail.

5. The details of the description can be presented in a straightforward spatial order, moving from left to right or right to left, from top to bottom or bottom to top.

6. At final, you can also combine organizing schemes, using different schemes in different parts of the description.

7. The particular technique you choose depends on the dominant impression you want to convey, your thesis, and your purpose and audience.

I. Points for Special Attention

Objective Description:

1. In an objective description, subjectively describing the things is not appropriate. Instead of giving subjective reaction, the author must present the facts and give special attention towards the object. Sometimes simple details and conveying straightforward intention of and about thesis is well enough.

Objective Language:

1. The language is also dependent on the readers, what level they belong to. If the description is written for readers already having know-how about the particular thing, place or person, the language may be more direct and technical for there will not be pains for the author to explain things.

2. For Example: In a scientific descriptive essay written for science students, the language will be technical, as the example of the objective description of a microscope.

3. In objective descriptions, subjective language and elaborate figures of speech are not used.

4. The objective language is technical, factual and concrete, and concentrates on the size shape and composition of the specimen.

Structure:

1. For Example: In the essay about the description of a microscope, the author starts from the bottom of the microscope, with its largest part – the stand. He next directs the reader's attention upward from the optic tube to the eyepiece and than downward. In the introduction, the author comments on the microscope's purpose and general appearance; in his conclusion, he summarizes the microscope's historical significance and briefly considers its future.

Selection of Detail:

1. For Example: The identification of readers who will read the essay is important for selecting the details of the objective essay. The level of readers, for example, in "The Light Microscope" is a group of well-educated nonscientists who know what a microscope looks like but that he would have to describe the individual components in detail.

II. Points for Special Attention

Subjective Description:

1. Vivid details are used. Using language the place is described and shown.
2. Using language in specific way helps the author to create dominant impression of the subject.
3. The language is specific, just like in the previous objective description, but this is used to create a different kind of dominant impression.
4. The thesis of the description, here, comes at the last paragraph.