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14 Narrative Writing

When you write a **narrative**, you write a story. A story has a beginning, middle, and end. At the beginning, the writer introduces the characters and the **setting**. The setting is when and where an event takes place. During the middle of the story, events happen, conflict builds, and a climax is reached. Finally, there is the last event or ending.

There are two kinds of narratives. A story based on events that happened to you in real life is called a **personal narrative**. You use the pronouns *I*, *me*, *my*, and *mine* when you write about something that happened to you. Stories that are made up are called **creative narratives**. Writers often use details from their own lives to make these stories seem true to life.

You should write about the events in the order that they happened. This is called **time order**. Using time order gives the story a clear beginning, middle, and end. If the time order, or chronology, of events is unclear, your story will be hard to follow.



Guided Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

Everyone experiences disappointment. The way a person handles disappointment tells a lot about what is important to the person.

Write a personal narrative for your classmates. Tell about a time you were disappointed and how you handled it.

Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- tell what happened
- arrange the details about the event in time order
- give details about the time and place and your feelings
- use first-person pronouns *I* and *me*



Step 1: Prewrite

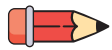
Read the writing assignment again. Underline key words. This will help you know what to write about.

What words give clues about the type of narrative you will write?



There are two types of narratives. One type is about real-life experiences, and the other is made up.

The next step is to plan what to write. First, decide on the experience. Jot down notes about what happened first, second, and so on. Then write details about the event.



A graphic organizer helps put ideas in order. Choose one that fits the kind of writing you will do. A narrative tells about an event in time order. It also tells about the setting and characters. You could use a sequence chart that shows events in time order or a story map.

Here is how one student, Ajla, organizes her ideas. She writes her ideas about the time and place. Then she arranges the events in time order.

Time and Place: state championships in spring, running track
Characters: Ajla, Kanisha, Azizah, Nikki

Time Order (Chronological Order)

- 1 Last spring, I tried out for the track team and made it.
- 2 I ran against my teammates and earned a spot on the medley relay.

3	
4	My team made it to the state championships.
5	My team won the preliminaries for our state championship race and was expected to win.
6	
7	I dropped the baton as I was handing it off to my teammate.
8	
9	I was disappointed.
10	

The items below complete the graphic organizer. Number them in the order in which you think they happened. Number them 3, 6, 8, 10 to complete the graphic organizer.

- _____ I learned how to leave the starting blocks, run on the track, and hand off the baton.
- _____ My team was disqualified.
- _____ I thought about what my father told me, and I made up my mind to come back next year.
- _____ I went off the starting block and ran the first leg of the race.



Often, one event has an effect on another event. This helps you understand what happened first and what happened next.

The next step is to write the draft.

Step 2: Draft

Read Ajla's draft. Then answer the questions.

Last spring, I made the track team. The girls' team did not have a medley relay, so the coach placed Azizah, Nikki, Kanesha, and me in those spots. Azizah ran the 400 meter, Nikki ran the 200, and Kanesha and I started the race by running the 100.

I had a lot to learn. I learned to explode out of the starting blocks, without going too early or too late. I practiced holding on to the baton, placing it in the bottom of my palm. I had to avoid stepping over the white line, or my team would be disqualified. When I reached Kanesha, I had to hand off the baton to her. She and me practiced our hand-offs over and over.

At the end of the season, my team made it to the state competitions. The day of the race we were confident we could win. We had won the preliminaries the day before. Before the race, we jogged and did our stretches. Our practice hand-offs went well.

Soon, our race was called. I slide into the starting blocks. Then we were off. I ran as fast as I could towards Kanesha. As I started to hand off the baton, it slipped from my palm and hit the track. A red flag went up. My team was disqualified.

My teammates and I cried in disappointment. I felt that I had let them down. As I left the stadium, I was very

disappointed. Yet, I thought about what my dad said: You win
some, and you lose some, but life goes on. I made up my mind to
work hard so that we would be back here next year.

What specific event does Ajla's narrative focus on?



Ajla must write about a time she was disappointed and how she handled it. Think about the details Ajla gives. Where did the event happen?

What are two details that she describes?



Ajla tells what happened. She writes about what she did and saw.

Which words or phrases tell the order of events in the narrative?



Think about how you know what happened first, next, and last.

The next step is to revise the draft.

Step 3: Revise

Read the revised draft. Then answer the questions.

Last spring, I made the track team. The girls' team did not have a medley relay, so the coach placed Azizah, Nikki, Kanesha, and me in those spots. Azizah ran the 400 meter, Nikki ran the 200, and Kanesha and I started the race by running the 100. **We earned our spots by running off against our teammates.**

I had a lot to learn. I learned to explode out of the starting blocks, without going too early or too late. I practiced holding on to the baton, placing it in the bottom of my palm. I had to avoid stepping over the white line, or my team would be disqualified. When I reached Kanesha, I had to hand off the baton to her. She and me practiced our hand-offs over and over.

At the end of the season, my team made it to the state competitions. The day of the race we were confident we could win. We had won the preliminaries the day before. **and were picked to win the race** Before the race, we jogged and did our stretches. Our practice hand-offs went well.

Soon, our race was called. I slide into the starting blocks.

Then we were off. I ran as fast as I could towards Kanisha. As

I started to hand off the baton, it slipped from my ^{sweaty} palm and hit

the track. A red flag went up. My team was disqualified.

My teammates and I cried in disappointment. I felt

that I had let them down. As I left the stadium, I was very

disappointed. Yet, I thought about what my dad said: You win

some, and you lose some, but life goes on. I made up my mind to

work hard so that we would be back here next year.

Why does Ajla add a sentence to paragraph 1?



Writers often add sentences to add information.

Why does Ajla add the word *sweaty* to the sentence in paragraph 4?



What information does this give you? Does this word help you understand why something happened?



Peer Review

Use the rubric on the next page to review Ajla's writing and give it a score. This is called **peer review**. A number is assigned to tell how well the question was answered. The rubric tells what is needed for the highest score. It also tells why some writing might receive lower scores.



Narrative Writing Rubric

Score 3

- The writing answers all parts of the question.
- The writing has a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- The writing describes the setting, characters, and events in detail.
- Events are clearly presented in time order.
- Words are used correctly and well.
- There are almost no mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Score 2

- The writing answers almost all parts of the question.
- The writing has a somewhat clear beginning, middle, and end.
- The writing describes the setting, characters, and events in detail, but it could be clearer.
- Events are mainly presented in time order.
- Some words are misused.
- There are some mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Score 1

- The writing answers only part of the question.
- The writing does not have a clear narrative structure.
- The setting, characters, and events are not clearly described.
- Events are not presented in time order.
- Many words are overused or misused.
- There are several mistakes in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

What score would Ajla's draft receive?

Score: _____



Is the writing clear? Does it answer the question?

Why do you think it would receive this score?



Are there any mistakes?

Step 4: Edit

Ajla made the big corrections to her draft. The next step is to edit the draft. Ajla will read the draft again. She will check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. She will use proofreading symbols to mark changes to be made.

Proofreading Chart	
Symbol	Example
^ Add letters or words.	The dolphins ^{were} beautiful.
⊙ Add a period.	I heard them whistle ⊙
≡ Capitalize a letter.	Then [≡] i was scared.
○ Close up space.	They swam under ○ water.
^ Add a comma.	He wanted to play, but the dolphin didn't.
/ Lowercase a letter.	He wanted to play, but the D olphin didn't.
¶ Begin a new paragraph.	¶ The diver was all alone.
✂ Delete letters or words.	The diver was all at alone.
↺ Switch the position of letters or words.	They <u>played</u> <u>also</u> music.

Read the draft. Find and correct any mistakes. Use proofreading symbols to show changes.

Last spring, I made the track team. The girls' team did not have a medley relay, so the coach placed Azizah, Nikki, Kanesha, and me in those spots. Azizah ran the 400, Nikki ran the 200, and Kanesha and I started the race by running

the 100. We earned our spots by running off against our teammates.

I had a lot to learn. I learned to explode out of the starting blocks, without going too early or too late. I had to avoid stepping over the white line, or my team would be disqualified.

I practiced holding on to the baton, placing it in the bottom of my palm. When I reached Kanisha, I handed off the baton to her. She and me practiced our hand-offs over and over.

At the end of the season, my team made it to the state competitions. The day of the race we were confident we could win. We had won the preliminaries the day before and were picked to win the race. Before the race, we jogged and did our stretches. Our practice hand-offs went well.

Soon, our race was called. I slide into the starting blocks. Then we were off. I ran as fast as I could towards Kanisha. As I started to hand off the baton, it slipped from my sweaty palm and hit the track. A red flag went up. My team was disqualified.

My teammates and I cried in disappointment. I felt that I had let them down. As I left the stadium, I was very

disappointed. Yet, I thought about what my dad said: You win

some, and you lose some, but life goes on. I made up my mind to

work hard so that we would be back here next year.

How many mistakes did you find?



Look for mistakes in spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation.

Step 5: Publish

The final step is for Ajla to turn in her writing. Her teacher might read it to the class or ask Ajla to read it to the students.





Independent Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

Step 1: Prewrite

Everyone experiences disappointment. Think about a time in your life that you were disappointed.

Write a personal narrative for your classmates about a time that you were disappointed.

Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- tell what happened
- arrange the details about the event in time order
- give details about the time and place and your feelings
- use first-person pronouns *I* and *me*



1. Who is your audience?

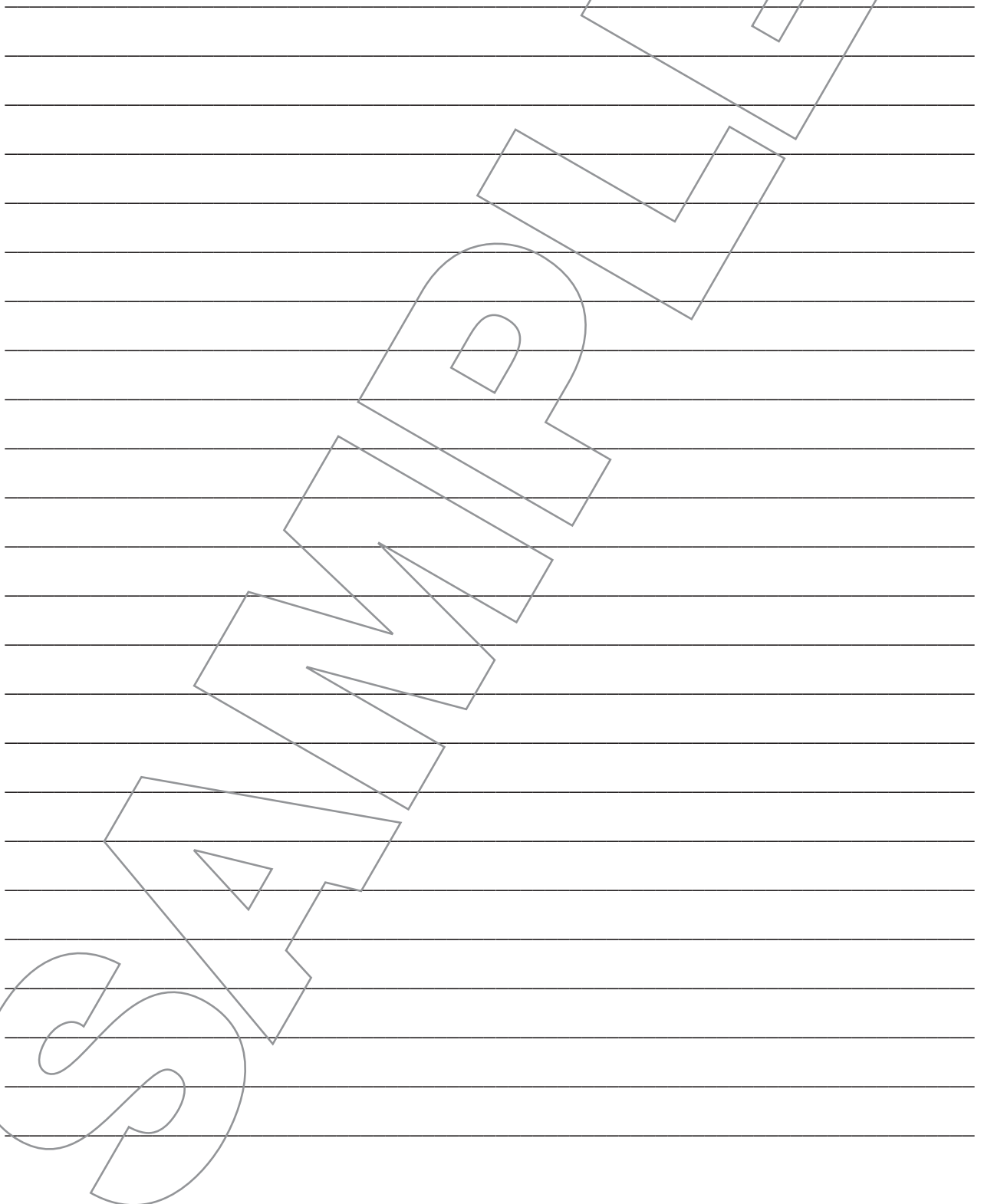
2. What kind of writing are you being asked to do?

3. Fill in the graphic organizer to plan your writing.

Subject:	
	↓
1	
	↓
2	
	↓
3	
	↓
4	
	↓
5	
	↓
6	

Step 2: Draft

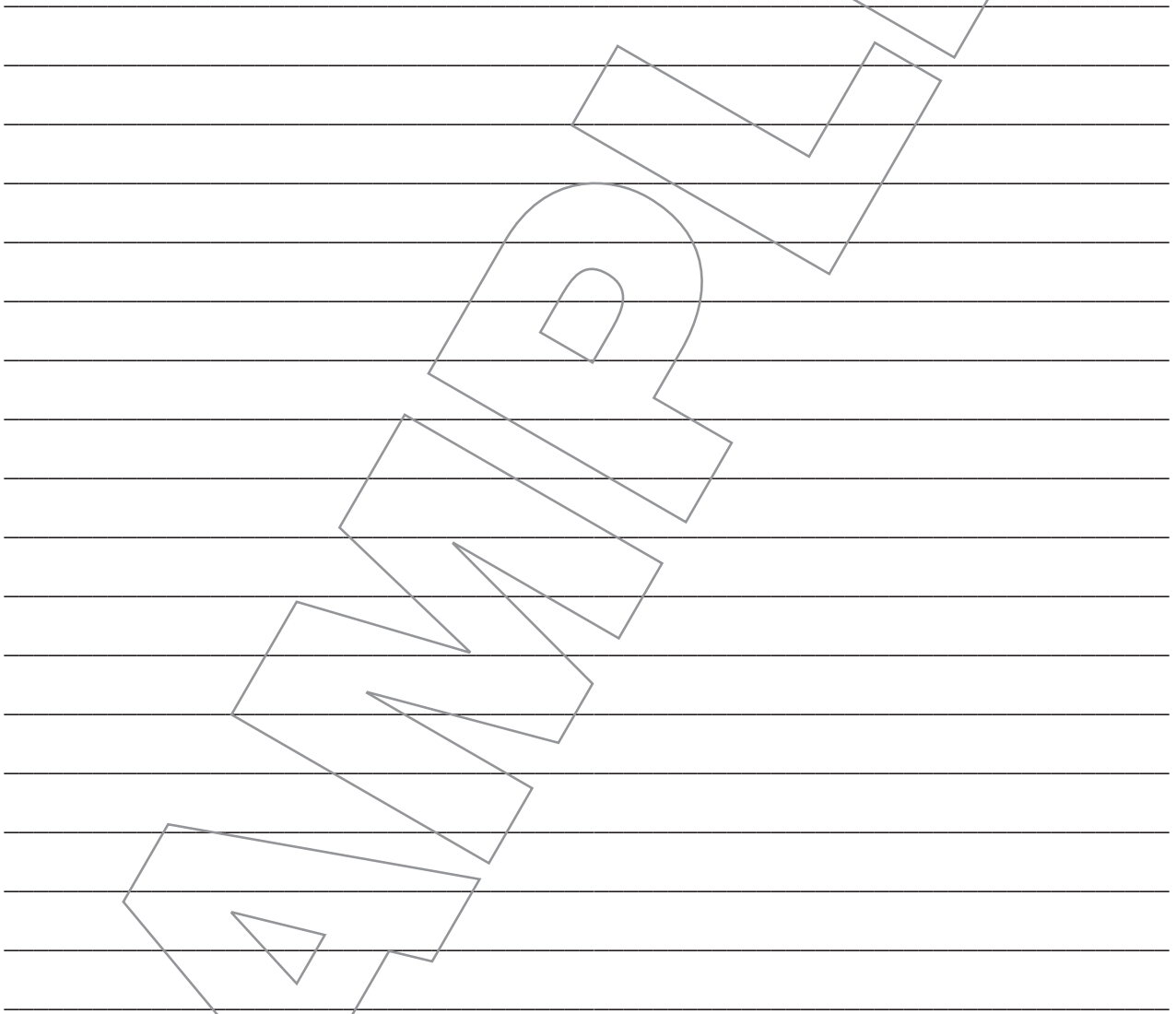
4. Write your draft below. Use the graphic organizer on the previous page to help you write your draft. Be sure you tell the time and place. Then use time order to write your narrative.



Step 3: Revise

Step 4: Edit

5. When you have finished your draft, go back over it. Make your revision on this page. Then edit your revised draft. Use the rubric on page 178 and proofreading chart on page 180 to review your writing. Ask a peer to review your writing, too.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with a large, faint, diagonal watermark reading "DRAFT" overlaid across the center.

Step 5: Publish

6. Write or type your final answer on a separate sheet of paper. Publish your writing by turning it in to your teacher or sharing it with the class.