

Checklist for Narrative Writing in Lower and Middle Grades

BEFORE the essay:

- ☐ I have a clear idea of how I want my story to unfold. I also know from which point of view my story will be written (First person = “I, me, we” and Third person = “he, she, they”)
- ☐ I have put the details that build my story into logical groups.
- ☐ I have a clear picture in my head of the setting, the main characters, and the plot development.

The BEGINNING of the essay:

* Did you begin the passage with something to engage your reader (make them excited about reading your entire story)?

- ☐ My opening paragraph “sets the stage” for the reader by providing a few important details about the setting, the main character, or the problem.
- ☐ I used language that is creative and descriptive. I chose adjectives, adverbs, and verbs that will engage my reader.

The BODY of your essay:

- ☐ Did you create a clear image of the setting for you reader? Can they picture it in their head?
- ☐ Did you build the character traits of the main character so that the reader feels like he or she is a real person?
- ☐ Did you build the plot in a logical, interesting way?
- ☐ Did you use dialogue?

☐ Did you include a moment of excitement or suspense?

☐ Did you use transitions throughout your essay?

The CONCLUSION of the essay:

☐ Did you provide a logical or surprising ending to your story?

Now, it's time to practice.

1. **Brainstorm.** You may choose to make this a personal narrative written in first person or a third person narrative written about made-up characters. Choose your style. Then, brainstorm what you want your story to be about. For example, if you choose to write a personal narrative, think of something that your reader will enjoy reading about your life. If you choose a third person narrative, think of interesting or exciting characters and a plot that will engage your reader.

2. **Outline.** Complete the basic outline below.

My Title: _____

Introduce your story with something that will get the attention of your reader. Many stories begin with dialogue or a description of the setting. 2-3 sentences

How will the beginning of your story develop? 1 -2 sentences

How will the middle of your story develop? There should be some type of problem or something that needs to be resolved. 1 -2 sentences

How will the problem in your story be resolved? 1 -2 sentences

Conclusion: How will your story end? 1 -2 sentence

additional details.

* Be sure to use transition words and phrases so that the parts of your story flow together. Your paragraphs should not sound "choppy" to your reader.

* Be sure your sentences are varied. That means that you use a mix of simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, and dialogue.