

Narrative Essays

When writing a narrative essay, one might think of it as telling a story. These essays are often anecdotal, experiential, and personal—allowing the student to express herself in a creative and, quite often, moving way.

Here are some guidelines for writing a narrative essay:

If written as a story, the essay should include all the parts of a story.

This means that you must include an introduction, plot, characters, setting, climax, and conclusion.

When would a narrative essay not be written as a story?

A good example of this is when an instructor asks a student to write a book report. Obviously, this would not necessarily follow the pattern of a story and would focus on providing an informative narrative for the reader.

The essay should have a purpose.

Make a point! Think of this as the thesis of your story. If there is not point to what you are narrating, why narrate it at all?

The essay should be written from a clear point of view.

It is quite common for narrative essays to be written from the standpoint of the author; however, this is not the sole perspective to be considered. Creativity in narrative essays often times manifests itself in the form of authorial perspective.

Use clear and concise language throughout the essay.

Much like the descriptive essay, narrative essays are effective when the language is carefully, particularly, and artfully chosen. Use specific language to evoke specific emotions and senses in the reader.

The use of the first person pronoun 'I' is welcomed.

Do not abuse this guideline! Though it is welcomed it is not necessary—nor should it be overused for lack of clearer diction.

As always, be organized!

Have a clear introduction that sets the tone for the remainder of the essay. Do not leave the reader guessing about the purpose of your narrative. Remember, you are in control of the essay, so guide it where you desire (just make sure your audience can follow your lead).