

Al- Ma'mon University College
Department of English Language
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Writing skills
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WRITING
GUIDE

Narrative Paragraph

In this lesson, you will learn

- what narrative paragraph is,
- how to organize a narrative paragraph,
- and strategies to improve your paragraph

Narrative
Writing
tells a
story.



Source:

- Narrative paragraph tells a **story** or an **event**.
- It could be tale, novel, an account of one's life, natural phenomena, or social events...
- The story/events in narrative paragraph should be arranged chronologically (time order), that is in the order in which they have happened.

- Almost everyone narrates, reads, or listens to stories from books, other people, or media. However, the audience *expects and needs more* from a written narrative.
- Therefore, a narrative paragraph must have:
 - **a central idea** (what the story/event is about),
 - **characters** (who it is about),
 - **a plot** (conflict, complication, climax, and resolution of the story/event),
 - **adequate description**,
 - and **setting** (when and where the story happens).

- A good narrative paragraph normally requires three necessary components:
 - **background information,**
 - **the story/event (a summary),**
 - **and the conclusion.**

The background information sets the scene for the audience. It includes the following pieces of information:

- **A topic sentence,**
- **What story/event is about,**
- **Who it is about,**
- **When it happens,**
- **Where it happens,**
- **Where is the source of the narration.**

Note: *the topic sentence of a narrative paragraph does not start the narration. It establishes a purpose. It does not tell only a story, but also the reader's view point. Therefore, writing a strong topic sentence is important.*

The story or event happens at 3 different stages: the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story or event.

- ***The beginning of the story*** – the beginning tells what happens first in the story. **It can be the problem which makes the story or event happen.**
- ***The middle of the story*** – the middle tells the main events or important activities of the story/event.
- ***The end of the story*** – the end tells the final events, i.e. the result or what brings the end of the story/event.

It is a concluding sentence. The writer can either

- restate the topic sentence,
- give a concluding remark,
- make a prediction about the story,
- or make a suggestion.

Tum Teav

(1) Tum Teav is an interesting story. (2) The story is a real love tragedy happened in the 16th century in presently Kampong Cham province. (3) It is widely taught in high school. (4) The story begins when Tum and Teav fall in love at their first sight. (5) Their love is so deep that they have abused the traditional barriers and engaged in a pre-marriage love affair – it is strongly prohibited in Khmer culture. (6) Not long after, Teav's mum arranges a marriage with rich guy for Teav, but fails. (7) Then, Teav is selected as a concubine and sent to the capital. (8) The king admires her so much, but with mercy he offers Tum and Teav a wedding. (9) As dissatisfaction grows, Teav's mum rearranges the marriage with the previous guy. (10) Teav is deceived and comes back home. (11) With worry, Tum follows her. (12) Tum arrival at Teav's wedding marks end of the story. (13) Tum is caught and executed. (14) Teav, with love for her husband, commits suicide. (15) The couple death outrages the king that he orders execution for those involved in the tragedy. (16) The story, I believe, is so appealing.

Sample Explanation

- The topic sentence is sentence (1). It tells the purpose, that's what the writer will write about.
- The background information includes sentences (2) and (3). Sentence (2) tells what the story is about, and when and where it happens. Sentence (3) tells the source of the story.
- The story comprises of sentence (4) to (15).
 - Sentence (4) and (5) tell the beginning of the story.
 - Sentence (6)-(11), which is middle of the story, tell the main events happen in the story.
 - Sentence (12)-(15) tells the end of the story.
- Sentence (16) is the concluding sentence. It restates the topic sentence.

Examples

NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS

My Shopping Norte's Nightmare

(1) I'll never forget the first time I got lost in La Paz City. (2) I was traveling with my parents during summer vacation. (3) We were in a department store, and I was so excited to see such a huge place. (4) Suddenly, I turned around to ask my mom something, but she was gone! (5) I began crying and screaming at the top of my lungs. (6) A salesclerk came up to me and dad came running toward me and ask if I was okay. (7) She got on the public address (P.A.) system and notified the customers that a little boy with blue jeans and a red cap was lost. (8) Two minutes later my mom and dad came running toward me. (9) We all cried and hugged each other. (10) I'll never forget that day as long as I live.

BAD DAY

My day was a disaster. First, it had snowed during the night, which meant I had to shovel before I could leave for work. I was mad that I hadn't gotten up earlier. Then I had trouble starting my car, and to make matters worse, my daughter wasn't feeling well and said she didn't think she should go to school. When I eventually did arrive at work, I was twenty minutes late. Soon I found out my assistant had forgotten to make copies of a report I needed at nine o'clock. I quickly had to make another plan. By five o'clock, I was looking forward to getting my paycheck. Foolish woman! When I went to pick it up, the office assistant told me that something had gone wrong with the computers. I would not be able to get my check until Tuesday. Disappointed, I walked down the hill to the parking lot. There I met my final defeat. In my hurry to park the car in the morning, I had left my parking lights on. Now my battery was dead. Even an optimist like me had the right to be discouraged!

THE MARS

Close-up study of the planet Mars began when rockets were developed that could send scientific instruments into space. In 1965, the first observations of Mars were done by the American spacecraft *Mariner 4*, which flew near the planet to collect data and take photographs. Four years later, more data and photographs were collected by *Mariners 6 and 7* as they flew past the planet. Then, in 1971, *Mariner 9* actually went into orbit around Mars, and during the following eleven months, sent back more than 7,000 images before contact with the spacecraft was lost. The next major step, in 1976, was the landing of two Viking crafts on two different areas of Mars' surface. These landers were able to send back important data about the atmosphere of the planet.

Sample 5

A Trip to the Country

One day a father and his rich family took his young son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family. When they got back from their trip the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" The boy replied, "Very good, Dad!" The father continued, "Did you see how poor people can be?" The boy just said, "Yeah!" The father asked again, "And what did you learn?" The boy answered, "I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden; they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars; our patio reaches to the front yard, they have a whole horizon. When the little boy was finishing, his father was speechless. The son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are!"

It's your turn!

ACTIVITIES

Activity

- Think of a story and write a short paragraph.
- Think of one of your own experiences and retell it.



Any questions?

Thank you for your attention!