

Next Generation Assessment Edition

7

STRATEGIES FOR
writers



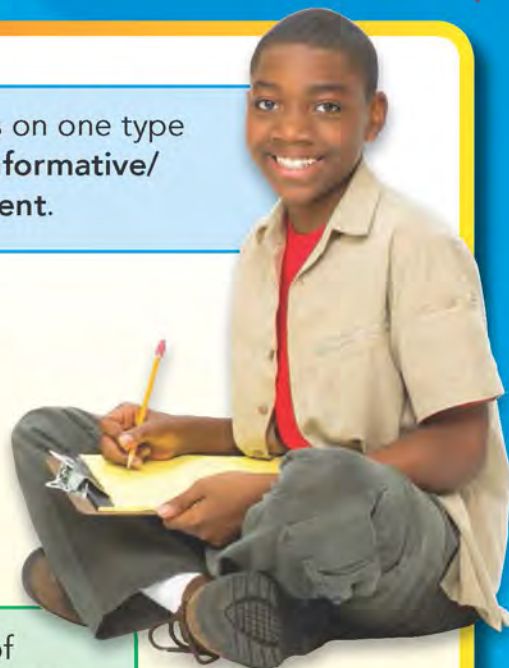
Hi, there! We're your *Strategies for Writers* Writing Partners!

For Teachers' Inspection ONLY

We're here to guide you step-by-step through the stages of the writing process: Prewrite, Draft, Revise, Edit, and Publish.



In each unit, we'll focus on one type of writing: **narrative, informative/explanatory, or argument.**



Have you ever wondered what makes a good personal narrative? Or what the elements of a cause-and-effect report are? How about some reasons for writing a summary? We'll answer those questions and more.



We'll focus on these six traits of effective writing: **Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions.** We'll explain how to apply the traits to each genre of writing, and we'll show you how the traits work together.



In each chapter, we'll first review a model writing sample. Then we'll use a rubric to score the model. Rubrics are a great way to know exactly what is expected as you plan and evaluate your writing. After that, it's your turn to write!

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Narrative


writing tells a story about real or imaginary events.

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Hi, there! I'm Nina. I'm learning to write narratives at school, and I really think I'm going to like it. I share stories, both real and made up, with my friends and family. Sometimes I tell stories about experiments I do in science class or about interesting events in history. They always tell me I should write them down, and I can't wait to get started!

IN THIS UNIT

- Personal Narrative
- E-Mail
- Historical Episode
- SCIENCE CONNECTION**  Play
- Next Generation Narrative Assessment

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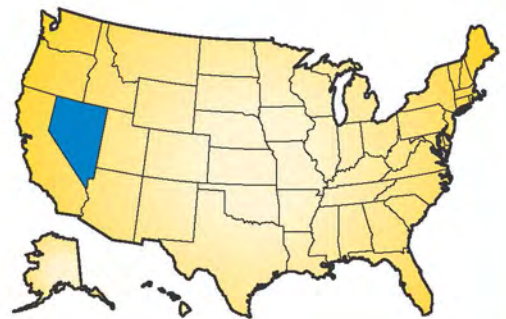
Name: Nina

Home: Nevada

Hobbies: reading, history, sketching buildings, traveling with Dad

Favorite Books: *Castle and Pyramid* by David Macaulay

Favorite Foods: tacos and fried chicken



What's a Personal Narrative?

It's a true story about an event that really happened to me. I think this kind of writing is fun because I get to write about something interesting, exciting, or even sad from my own life.

What's in a Personal Narrative?

Narrator

That's me! The narrator is the person who is telling the story. I've experienced many things that I'd like to tell people. Now I'll be able to share one of my stories with an audience!

Sequence

This is the order in which things happened. I'll describe the events of my story as they happened because I want my reader to understand the big picture, from beginning to end.

Tone

Tone is how I want my story to sound and how I want my readers to feel. I can change the tone depending on what I'm writing about. It sounds tricky, but it isn't. I might use short sentence patterns to build suspense, powerful verbs to create drama, or descriptive language to create a mysterious, sad, or funny tone.

The 5 W's

These are the details that tell the **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, and **why** of my story. I'll use all of these in my story, but I have to remember to keep each detail vivid and true!



Why write a Personal Narrative?

There are plenty of reasons to write a personal narrative. I listed some here. I hope they will help me as I think about what I want to write.

Entertainment

Entertaining the reader is one good reason to write a personal narrative. Sometimes something happens to me that is so funny, exciting, or sad that I just want to share it with someone else.

Personal Reflectio

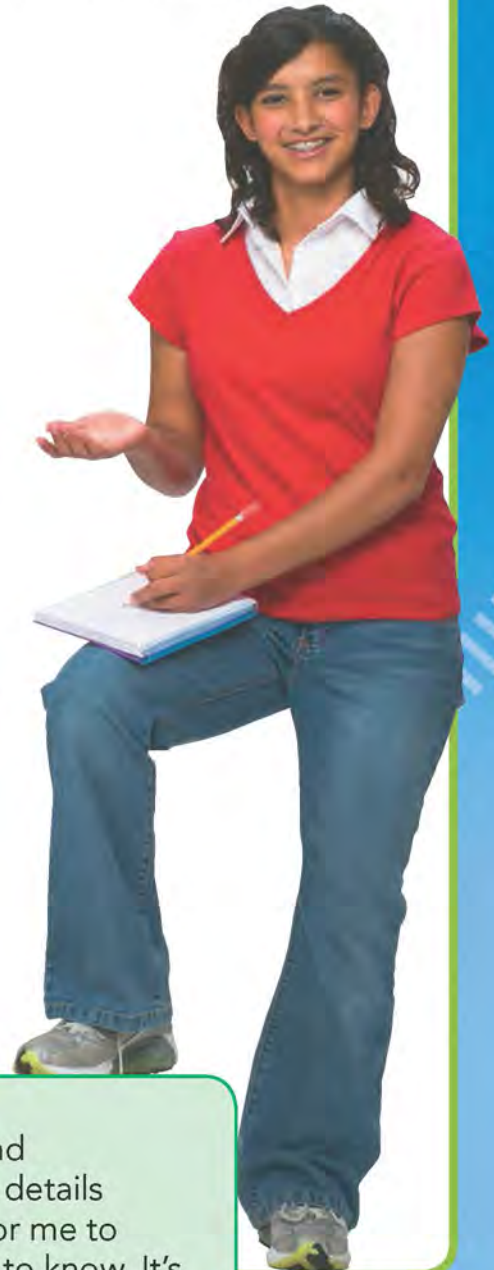
Writing helps me reflect, or make sense out of the things I remember. Reflecting can help me understand how I've been affected by something I've experienced.

Information

Sometimes I might experience something that would be useful for others to read about. I can write my account in order to educate, instruct, or inform my reader.

Summary

Some things I've experienced would make long and complicated stories. Often there are many smaller details that lead up to one main event, so it's important for me to summarize only the details my reader really needs to know. It's also good to practice using my summarization skills, especially since I'll use them a lot in school.



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Linking Narrative Writing Traits to a Personal Narrative

In this chapter, you will write a story about an experience you want to share. This type of narrative writing is called a personal narrative. Nina will guide you through the stages of the writing process: Prewrite, Draft, Revise, Edit, and Publish. In each stage, Nina will show you important writing strategies that are linked to the Narrative Writing Traits below.

Narrative Writing Traits

Ideas

- a single, focused topic with relevant, engaging details that develop the experiences or events
- a narrator or characters that bring the story to life

Organization

- well-structured and logical event sequences, often in chronological order, that guide the reader through the story
- an engaging beginning and a satisfying conclusion that reflects on the story's events
- a variety of transition words that signal time or setting changes

Voice

- a voice that is appropriate for the audience and purpose
- dialogue, if used, is realistic and helps develop the characters and story

Word Choice

- precise, descriptive words and phrases

Sentence Fluency

- a variety of sentences that flow and are a pleasure to read aloud

Conventions

- no or few errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling

Before you write, read Melanie Van der Hoff's personal narrative on the next three pages. Then use the personal narrative rubric on pages 10–11 to decide how well she did. (You might want to look back at What's in a Personal Narrative? on page 4, too!)

A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME

by Melanie Van der Hoff

Narrator

The older people in our family used to talk often about World War II. The years were passing, but the men's memories of fighting to free Europe remained strong. Then the movie *Saving Private Ryan* came out in 1998, and Uncle Harry knew he had to go back to see France again. I was lucky enough to be one of the family members who went with him that year. The area that our visit would primarily focus on was the Normandy Beaches. About 150 miles to the west of Paris, these beaches were the landing spot in June 1944 for 175,000 British, American, and Canadian forces. They had crossed the English Channel from Britain in boats and planes. Their goal was to retake Europe from Nazi Germany. Uncle Harry was one of the soldiers who made the landing.

The journey back in time began when our plane landed in Paris. This beautiful city became the headquarters for our trip. From a small hotel in the district called the Latin Quarter, it was an easy Metro, or subway, ride to the city's main attractions. We strolled along the Seine River, stood in line for the elevators to the top of the Eiffel Tower, and saw the *Mona Lisa* at the Louvre Museum. But these sights, though impressive, were not the real reason for our trip.



On the fourth day, we rented a car and set out for our true destination. Meandering north through the French countryside, we saw ancient, sleepy villages as well as some with a more modern appearance. Uncle Harry explained that these newer-looking towns had probably been bombed out during the war and then rebuilt.

Within a few hours, we were approaching the invasion area.

Sequence

Our guidebooks and maps traced out a quiet route along the coast. From our car, we saw the remains of German artillery in two different areas. The ancient rusting hulks, once so threatening to the Allied invaders, sat placidly in the sun. We joined the few tourists walking around one site, touching the artillery, and looking out to the sea. Uncle Harry did not want to get out of the car, though. He was saving his strength for the two things he had really come to see.

The first of these was the sea called Omaha Beach. A long, open stretch of land, this was the main invasion area for the American forces. I recalled the chaotic scenes from *Saving Private Ryan*, the soldiers shouting and dying everywhere, the boats and artillery all around. What a contrast with the quiet scene on the day we visited! Few, if any, signs of the great struggle remained. There was a family camping area nearby, and on the beach lay groups of teenagers sunbathing. I wondered if anyone in their families had ever shared wartime recollections with them. Uncle Harry shook his head almost sorrowfully. "It's all so different now," he whispered.

I wondered if Uncle Harry was ready for the other site he had wanted to visit: the American cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach. One look at his determined face, though, gave us our answer.

The American cemetery is one of the most impressive sites you will ever see. More than 9,000 soldiers killed on invasion day or soon after are buried there. The white crosses, interrupted now and then by Stars of David, are lined up in rows as far as one can see. The simple birth and death dates engraved on the grave markers tell nothing of the agony those soldiers endured. And some graves are not even identified. Engraved on these headstones are the words "HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY A COMRADE IN ARMS KNOWN BUT TO GOD."

Tone

Uncle Harry had never given us the particulars, but we knew that several of his close buddies had died on Omaha Beach. Now we asked him if he wanted to look for any of their graves. Too choked up with emotion to speak, Uncle Harry stood at the memorial in the center of the cemetery and shook his head no. He had done his duty just by going there. And it felt as if, by accompanying him and bearing witness to what he had endured, we had done our duty, too.



Prewrite

Focus on

Ideas

The Rubric Says The narrative orients the reader to and focuses on one event.

Writing Strategy List things the audience should know about the topic.



My dad took me to see the Mystery Spot in California. Right away, I knew I wanted to design buildings as cool as this.

When my teacher asked us to write a personal narrative, I chose the Mystery Spot. There is so much I could say, but I wanted to focus on things my audience would want and need to know. I made notes listing important points. That was my strategy. Here are my notes.

Notes About the Mystery Spot

- ✓ first visited Mystery Spot two years ago with Dad
- ✓ a couple of miles from downtown Santa Cruz, California
- ✓ Mystery Spot is on a hill, in the redwoods
- ✓ stand on 2 x 4s, smaller person looks taller (Dad and a kid)
- ✓ board sticking out of window—does the ball roll up?
- ✓ floor at 30-degree angle; pendulum easier to push one way than the other
- ✓ not really gravity—Dad got the answers
- ✓ psychologist from U. of California checked out Mystery Spot
- ✓ angles, tilts, and hill create optical illusions (define)
- ✓ loved the Mystery Spot, and loved the explanation
- ✓ made me want to be a creative builder, too

Write

Pick an event that you want to tell others about. Gather information by making notes on what you saw.

Prewrite

Focus on **Organization**

The Rubric Says

Ideas are organized to unfold naturally and logically.

Writing Strategy

Make a 5 W's Chart.

Before I write, I'll fill out a 5 W's chart. With all my information organized, it will be easy to keep all the events in a logical order as I write. I want the narration to flow naturally from one idea or event to the next.



Writer's Term

Sequence

Sequence is the order in which information is organized. It is important to make sure that information included is organized in a way that makes sense to the reader.

5W's Chart

What happened?

- visited Mystery Spot
- stood on 2 x 4s
- smaller person looks taller; board sticking out of window
- floor at 30-degree angle; pendulum
- Mystery Spot made me want to design buildings

Who was there?

- Dad and I

Why did it happen?

- not really gravity—Dad got the answers
- psychologist from U. of Cal. checked out Mystery Spot
- angles, tilts, and hill create optical illusions (define)

When did it happen?

- first visited two years ago

Where did it happen?

- on a hill, a couple of miles outside of Santa Cruz, in the redwoods

Analyze

Why does including all of the 5 W's make a good narrative?

Write

Organize your ideas by using your own notes to make a 5 W's Chart.

Draft

Focus on

Ideas

The Rubric Says The narrative orients the reader to and focuses on one event. Memorable description of the 5 W's develops the experience and answers the audience's questions.

Writing Strategy Use the 5 W's Chart to stay focused and answer the audience's questions.

I'm going to use my 5 W's Chart to write my draft. The rubric says to focus on one event, and to use memorable details to answer the 5 W's. Well, my chart is already complete, so now I'll use it as a guide while writing to keep me focused on the main topic.

I'll open my narrative by describing where I went (Santa Cruz, California) and what I did there (visited the Mystery Spot). I'll use loads of interesting and vivid details to help the reader visualize my trip. The rest of the 5 W's will be answered throughout my narrative. I'll worry about spelling and grammar later. Right now I just need to get started!



Proofreading Marks

☐ Indent	ℓ Take out something
≡ Make uppercase	⊙ Add a period
/ Make lowercase	¶ New paragraph
^ Add something	Ⓢ Spelling error

[DRAFT]

[starts with something to think about]

A Visit That Inspired Me

I've heard the saying that you can't learn everything you need to know in your own backyard. I'm not sure that's exactly true.

I do think you can learn a lot of things on trips to interesting places, though. When I first visited the Mystery Spot two years ago with my dad, we were traveling to California. I learned two important things. One is that buildings can be designed in very interesting ways. The other is that I might want to design some interesting buildings myself.

The Mystery Spot is just a few miles from downtown Santa Cruz, in the middle of some redwoods. Dad and I had noticed it on our way into the city. Then the desk clerk at our motel told us that we should stop there, that it was really worth seeing. So the next day we decided to make a special trip to the Spot. The signs along the road made it easy to find the place.

[where, when, who, what]

Analyze

What do you think? How do Nina's introductory details grab and hold the reader's interest?

Write

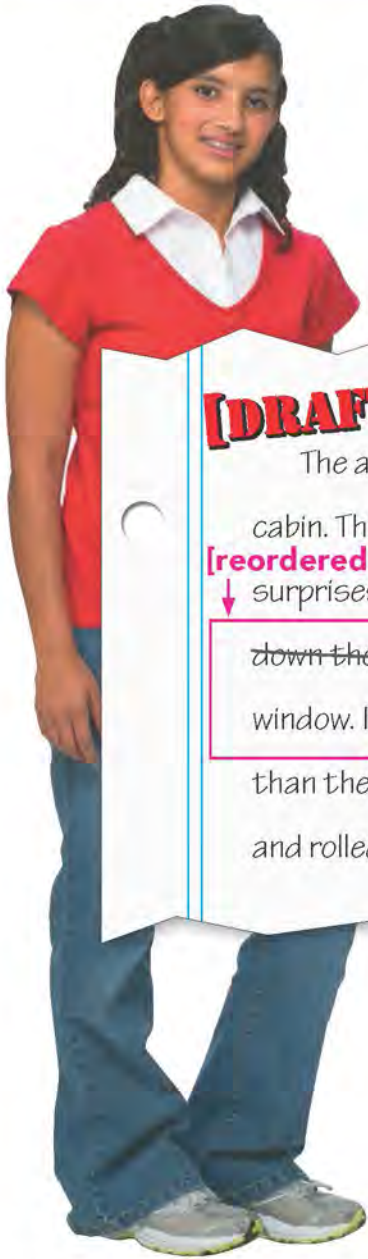
Write a draft using interesting details from your 5 W's Chart to grab your audience's attention.

Revise

Focus on **Organization**

The Rubric Says Ideas are organized to unfold naturally and logically.

Writing Strategy Reorder sentences that seem out of place.



I thought the sentences in my narrative were organized well when I read it over. They take the reader through the story in a logical order. However, in the paragraph about the ball rolling up the board, I can see that if I change the order of the sentences just a little, this scene would make a lot more sense.

[DRAFT]

The area where things began to get really bazaar was the cabin. This structure looked old and wore down. Filled with surprises. When we walked up to the cabin, ~~the guide rolled a ball down the long board.~~ We saw a long board sticking out a front window. It was pretty obvious that the end sticking out was higher than the end resting inside. ~~The ball went a little way it stopped and rolled right back up!~~ **Then the guide rolled a ball down the board.** What was going on here?

Write

Are your sentences in a logical order? Revise them as necessary to make sure they make sense to the audience.

Revise

Focus on

Voice

The Rubric Says

The writer makes a strong connection with the reader by using first-person point of view and a personal tone.

Writing Strategy

Use personal pronouns (*I, me*) to connect with the readers.

My job as a narrator is to help my reader fully connect with and understand my story. I use first-person pronouns throughout my narrative, but I did find an area where my voice is a bit too formal. I will make some revisions now to create a more casual tone.



[DRAFT]

[used casual tone] → pretty

The Mystery Spot is a small area, only about 150 feet in diameter. You have to climb a hill to reach it, and the tour guides promise that strange things puzzling events will start happening the minute you step into it. These guides are not lying misleading.

Analyze

What do you think? How do Nina's revisions help her connect with the reader?

Write

Revise your writing to use first-person point of view and a casual tone to connect with the reader.

Revise

Focus on **Word Choice**

The Rubric Says Precise words and phrases convey the experience and bring the story to life.

Writing Strategy Choose precise and interesting words and phrases for effect.

I want my reader to feel as excited as I felt when I visited the Mystery Spot. But some sections of my draft are boring. I'll add some precise and interesting words to liven things up, just as the rubric says.



[DRAFT]

[added specific phrases] → from work

A few days later, Dad come home with some answers. One of his coworkers told him that a psychologist from the University of California had checked out the place. He discovered that all the strange things we had experienced are based on optical illusions,

Remember that the Mystery Spot was built on a hill. That, along with the angles and walls, confuses people into thinking things is not level—when they actually are.

[added interesting words]

Write

Add specific and interesting words to your draft to bring your story to life.

Edit

Focus on Conventions

The Rubric Says

Conjunctions are used correctly in compound sentences, and all sentences are complete.

Writing Strategy

Make sure all sentences are complete.

Writer's Term

Sentence Fragment

A **sentence fragment** is a group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or other end punctuation but does not state a complete thought.

Writer's Term

Run-on Sentence

A **run-on sentence** is two simple sentences that are run together and not joined correctly.

I'm almost done! Now I just have to check my spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The rubric says all sentences should be complete, and conjunctions should be used properly. I'll keep my eyes open for these things, too.

[DRAFT]

The area where things began to get really ~~bazaar~~ was the cabin. This structure looked old and ~~wore~~ down & filled with surprises.

[corrected sentence fragment]

bizarre
n, but it was
down & filled with

Analyze

What do you think? How did Nina do with her grammar, spelling, and punctuation? Can you find any incomplete sentences?

How did Nina's editing help to clarify meaning in her writing?

Write

Conventions

Your turn! Edit your draft for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Make sure all sentences are complete and conjunctions are used properly.

For more practice fixing incomplete sentences and using conjunctions correctly, use the exercises on the next two pages.

Publish

+Presentation

Publishing Strategy

Publish the narrative in a class diary.

Presentation Strategy

Use photographs or illustrations to help tell the story.

That was fun to write, and it will be even more fun to share. I think I'll publish my personal narrative in our class diary so my classmates can share in the mystery of the Mystery Spot. I'll use some photographs from my trip to give even more details of my adventure. I'll be sure to place the photos near the appropriate text to avoid confusion. I'll be sure my work is neat and readable, whether I write it by hand or use a computer. I'll also need to read it one last time to make sure it includes all the items on my checklist.

My Final Checklist

Did I—

- ✓ fix any incomplete sentences?
- ✓ correctly use coordinating conjunctions?
- ✓ use helpful and properly placed photographs or illustrations?
- ✓ neatly handwrite or type my paper?
- ✓ put my name on each page of my narrative?

Write

Make a checklist for your own personal narrative. Then make a final draft to publish.



A VISIT THAT INSPIRED ME

by Nina

I've heard the saying that you can't learn everything you need to know in your own backyard. I'm not sure that's exactly true. I do think you can learn a lot of things on trips to interesting places, though. When I first visited the Mystery Spot two years ago with my dad, we were traveling in California. I learned two important things. One is that buildings can be designed in very interesting ways. The other is that I might want to design some interesting buildings myself.

The Mystery Spot is just a few miles from downtown Santa Cruz, in the middle of some redwoods. Dad and I had noticed it on our way into the city. Then the desk clerk at our motel told us that we should stop there, that it was really worth seeing. So the next day we decided to make a special trip to the Spot. The signs along the road made it easy to find the place.

The Mystery Spot is a pretty small area, only about 150 feet in diameter. You have to climb a hill to reach it, and the tour guides promise that strange things will start happening the minute you step into it. These guides are not lying. For example, one of the first things you see is 2×4 s that stretch across two pieces of concrete. Our guide asked for volunteers to stand at each end of a 2×4 . My dad and a kid several inches shorter volunteered, and then they traded places. It looked like the kid was taller than my dad! I could tell right away that I was going to like this place.

The area where things began to get really bizarre was the cabin. This structure looked old and worn down, but it was filled with surprises.

When we walked up to the cabin, we saw a long board sticking out a front window. It was pretty obvious that the end sticking out was higher than the end resting inside. Then the guide rolled a ball down the board. The ball went a little way, but it stopped and rolled right back up! What was going on here? Could it be that the laws of gravity didn't work in this place?

The inside of the cabin was just as strange. The floor seemed to be pitched at about a 30-degree angle, and it was very hard to walk there. People seemed as if they were tilted in all directions and could fall over at any minute, and a few people held on to the railings because they were feeling dizzy. Another weird thing was the pendulum, which hung from the ceiling. You could push it in both directions, but it was much easier to push it to one side of the cabin than to the other.

I was finding the Mystery Spot totally fascinating, but I was also wondering what was going on. Our guide kept talking about strange gravitational forces, but my logical mind was telling me that this didn't quite make sense.



A few days later, Dad came home from work with some answers. One of his coworkers told him that a psychologist from the University of California had checked out the place. He discovered that all the strange things we had experienced are based on optical illusions, or sights that appear different from what they really are. Remember that the Mystery Spot was built on a hill. That, along with the crazy angles and tilted walls, confuses people into thinking things are not level—when they actually are.

I loved the Mystery Spot. After I heard this explanation, I loved it even more. It showed me that people could design houses or other buildings to create all sorts of impressions. They aren't exactly optical illusions, but there must be ways to make small rooms seem bigger and tall buildings seem even higher. I thought about some of the drawings I've done in industrial arts class. Maybe I could learn to combine my ideas into plans for some really neat buildings.

Analyze

What do you think? Did Nina use all the traits of a good personal narrative? Evaluate her writing against the rubric. Then use the rubric to evaluate the personal narrative you wrote!

