

## Narrative Essays

### 1. Narrative Organization

A narrative is a story. It has an introduction that engages the reader's interest, a body that gives details about the main event or action in the story, and a conclusion that describes the outcome.

#### *a- The Introduction*

- The hook gets the reader's attention.
- The middle sentences introduce an event (the action of the story) by providing background information about the people, the place, and the time.
- The thesis statement prepares the reader for the action that follows.

#### *b- The Body Paragraphs*

- The body paragraphs describe what happened in the story.
- They include details that bring the story to life.
- They often use time order to explain the event.

#### *c- The Conclusion*

- A conclusion describes the outcome of the event.
- It often ends with a comment by the writer about what the event showed or taught.

### Task 1: Reading an essay

Read the essay. What was the writer's embarrassing incident?

#### **An Embarrassing Incident**

Where I grew up, the rules for family life were very strict. I had five brothers and five sisters, and we spent a lot of time with our relatives. My parents taught us we should respect grandparents more than anyone in the world because grandparents had lived the longest. They had more knowledge about life, and no matter what they said, even if it did not make sense, they were right. We were taught that to hug or kiss grandparents was disrespectful and that we should greet them by kissing their hand. I was young, and I thought that everyone lived and thought just as I did. Well, I soon found out this is not true.

One day, an American friend invited me to her birthday party. I was very excited but at the same time very nervous. I wanted her family to like me, and I wanted to use my best manners. Slowly, I walked up to the house and rang the bell. My friend came running out with a big smile, telling me she was happy that I came. Then she let me in and introduced me to her parents. They smiled and said 'hello'. Later she said, "Come here. I want you to meet my

grandpa”. I followed her into the living room where her grandfather was sitting. She introduced me, and he reached out his hand. He was going to shake hands, but I thought he was expecting me to kiss his hand, so I did. He pulled his hand away and looked at me in a strange way as if he did not like what I had done. Everyone else in the room looked at me, and my friend started laughing. I was very confused. I sat down and tried to figure out what had happened. Just then, a little boy ran to my friend’s grandfather and jumped on his lap. When I saw this, I got up and took the little boy by the hand and said, ‘No’. I guess I said it pretty loudly because the room became very silent and all eyes were on me.

The next day at school my friend asked me why I kissed her grandfather’s hand and why I told the little boy to get away from his grandfather. I explained my customs to her and she explained hers to me. Finally, I learned that good manners are not always the same in different countries. Fortunately, my friend and I stayed very good friends.

### **Task 2: Analyzing the Essay**

A- Respond to the essay by answering the questions below in full sentences.

- 1- What background information do you learn about the writer? Why is this information important to understand the story?
- 2- What is the main event or action in the story?
- 3- What does the writer learn?

B- Examine the organization of the essay by answering the questions below.

- 1- Underline the hook.
- 2- Underline the sentences that give background information.
- 3- Reread the body paragraph. Circle one or two details that you like.
- 4- Circle any words that help you visualize the event more clearly.
- 5- Read the conclusion. Underline the sentences that explain what the writer learned.
- 6- Rewrite the author’s conclusion in your own words.

### **Language Focus 1: Showing Sequence in Narrative Essays**

In narrative essays, we use time expressions to make the chronological sequence of events clear.

- We use connectors (time adverbs) such as *then*, *finally*, or *eventually* to link sentences within a paragraph.
- We use subordinating conjunctions to link clauses within a sentence.

**Time Adverbs:** we use time adverbs such as *afterwards*, *after that*, *eventually*, *finally*, *later*, *later on*, *now*, *then*, and *suddenly* as connectors. These connectors usually appear at the beginning of a sentence. When they do, they are immediately followed by a comma.

N.B: *Then* is an exception. It is not followed by a comma.

**Language Focus 2: Adding Details to Essays**

Details are facts, examples, illustrations, definitions, and descriptions that make ideas or events clear. They answer *who, what, why, where, when,* and *how* questions. We add details to make our writing clearer and more effective.

Example:

| <b>General</b>      |        | <b>Detail</b>   |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| He went on vacation | Why?   | Because he was completely exhausted.                        |
|                     | How?   | He saved his money for a plane ticket.                      |
|                     | Where? | He traveled to Africa.                                      |
|                     | Who?   | Although he traveled alone, he met many interesting people. |

**Task: Asking Detail Questions about an outline**

Look at this outline and help the writer generate details by writing questions using *who, what, where, why,* or *how*.

**The Day I Became a Hero**

**Hook:** When I was eleven, I learned an important lesson about myself in gym class.

- Questions: What exactly did you learn? Where did you learn it? Who were you with? When did you learn it?

**Thesis Statement:** All the girls were afraid to jump over the pommel horse, but I was tired of waiting, so I decided to try.

- Questions:.....

**Topic Sentence :** I decided to go first.

- Questions: .....

**Supporting Detail:** I was overjoyed. I had jumped over the pommel horse without falling down.

- Questions: .....

**Conclusion:** That day, I learned that I like to do things that are a little bit hard.

- Questions:.....

**Task:** Write a three- paragraph essay about a learning experience that changed you or taught you something valuable.