

Guidance to Score Student Writing - Narratives

Understanding Narrative Elements

Element	Definition
Establishing Setting, Point of View, and Character	<p>The setting is the time and place where the events of the narrative happen. The characters are the figures who act and are acted upon in the narrative. The point of view is the narrator’s position in relation to the narrative being told.</p> <p>Establishing each of these elements is important to helping the reader understand the events of the narrative. After establishing these, the characters should be developed as they interact with the events.</p>
Narrative Techniques	<p>Narrative techniques help the reader understand and engage with the narrative. These techniques include dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection. The extent to which these techniques are used depends on the narrative and students should make the appropriate choices to engage readers.</p>
Theme/Message	<p>The theme is the message explored in the narrative. It should be a universal idea, such as the importance of friendship or coming of age or courage. Student narratives can have one or multiple themes and, while themes are unstated, they should be clearly understandable.</p>
Organization	<p>A piece of writing should use clear and coherent organization to show how all the ideas are connected. Ideas should be clearly grouped and flow easily from one group of ideas to another. Strong organization includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A logical and clear sequence of events and experiences. -Transitional words, phrases, and clauses that convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or place to another, and show the relationships among events and experiences.
Audience Appropriate Language (Style and Word Choice)	<p>Writers should choose language that is appropriate to their audience and purpose. They should have a clear style and tone that matches their purpose. Sentences should be varied to support meaning and purpose. Precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language should be used to convey events. Verbs and tenses used convey a particular effect to enhance the narrative.</p>
Conventions of English	<p>The writer should use correct and conventional grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Writers may intentionally break convention to develop a character’s unique voice.</p>

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Understanding the Rubrics

Students can score between 1-5 on the rubric, which generally means:

Levels	General Meaning
1	Not Present/Absent
2	Struggling to express rubric components - Attempted but not fully correct and/or effective
3	Emerging competency of rubric components - Demonstrated the structure, but clarity, cohesion, and/or linking to the topic/claim are still areas of growth
4	Well-understood and accomplished use of rubric components - Narrative mechanics understood and used correctly
5	Exemplary use of rubric components - mechanics understood and correctly demonstrated and integrated with Personalization/Voice (Flair)

NOTE: Mastery occurs over time. No one assessment (or assignment) should be used to demonstrate mastery.

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Below are examples for how you can provide a score for student work. Please refer to [Feedback on Student Writing](#) for additional questions and comments you can use in written or conference feedback. Additional guidance for scoring can be found in the [grade-level rubrics](#).

Establishing Setting, Point of View, and Characters

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has not included characters, setting, or point of view.	Give the student a 1 and provide guiding questions in feedback on how to appropriately develop characters, setting, and point of view. Students may benefit from using a graphic organizer to clarify their thinking. Return to students for revision.
Introduced setting, but the point of view is vague and the characters are not developed.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how developed the point of view or characters are) and provide guiding questions in feedback on how to further develop the elements. Refer students to a graphic organizer to clarify their thinking.
Includes a clear setting and develops characters and point of view.	Give the student a 4.
Creatively engages readers with a well-developed setting, narrator and/or complex characters, and point of view.	Give the student a 5.

Narrative Techniques

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has not included a narrative technique, such as dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection.	Give the student a 1 and provide guiding questions in feedback on how to appropriately include techniques to build a narrative and engage the reader. Return to students for revision.
Includes some narrative techniques, but they are inconsistent or not fully developed.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how developed the techniques are) and annotate where else they should have included techniques with guiding questions such as "How might this section be changed if instead of telling what happened you included a dialogue between the characters to advance the plot?"
Has developed the narrative through appropriate techniques that clearly develop the characters, advance the plot, or establish the point of view.	Give the student a 4.
Has developed the narrative through a variety of techniques that exhibit creativity and unique voice in order to engage the reader.	Give the student a 5.

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Theme/Message

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Does not have a theme or message.	Give the student a 1 and provide guiding questions students can use to determine what message or theme best suits the details in the story.
Does not have a clear theme or message.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how developed it is) and provide feedback to help students clarify the theme/message.
Provides a clearly developed theme or message.	Give the student a 4. The theme or message will usually not be stated but should be clearly identifiable in the narrative.
Provides a clearly developed theme or message that enhances the reader's understanding.	Give the student a 5. The theme or message will usually not be stated but should be clearly identifiable in the narrative.

Organization

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Does not have a sequence of events.	Give the student a 1, provide them a sequence graphic organizer and encourage them to use it to order their ideas.
Has a sequence but does not include transitions making the sequence and relationships unclear or difficult to understand.	Give the student a 1 and provide them with guiding questions to make the relationships between the narrative's events clearer.
Has an inconsistent or illogical sequence of events.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how easy it is to understand the story) and provide them with guiding questions or a sequence organizer to help them clarify their ideas.
Transitions are inconsistently included and their use, or lack of, make it difficult to understand the order of events.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how easy it is to understand the story) and provide them with guiding questions to help them clarify their ideas.
Follows a clear sequence of events, including transitions that help readers understand the relationships among events.	Give the student a 4.
Follows a clear and logical sequence of events using creative and engaging transitions to help the reader understand the relationships among events.	Give the student a 5.

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Audience Appropriate Language (Style)

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has a lack of descriptive details.	Give the student a 1 or 2 depending on how engaging the narrative is and point out places where details could be added. Provide guiding questions that students can use to add more details.
Has a lack of consistent verb tense that makes the narrative difficult to follow.	Give the student a 1 and provide guidance to help identify the correct tense that matches the events.
Has a piece of writing that does not have a clear audience in mind.	Ask students who their audience is for their piece of writing and what type of language or vocabulary they would use for that audience. If this should have been done before they submitted, give your student a 2. If not, then return for revision.
Includes some relevant descriptive details, but the events are difficult to understand.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on the details included) and provide guiding questions to help clarify the narrative events.
Uses verbs in the active or passive voice incorrectly or inconsistently.	Give the student a 2 or 3 (depending on how easy the narrative is to understand) and point out places in the narrative where the verb tenses are inconsistent with the telling of events.
Includes relevant descriptive details and sensory language that mostly helps readers understand the events. Verb tenses support understanding of events.	Give the student a 4.
Includes precise words, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language that clearly conveys the events. Verb tenses support understanding of events.	Give the student a 5.
Engages readers using audience appropriate language throughout.	Give your student a 5, but make sure to provide feedback as to why their language was audience-appropriate.

Conventions of English

If your student does this	Then you should give them
Has many errors	1
Has some errors	2-3 (depending on the student + errors)
Has a few errors.	4

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Has no errors.	5
<p>Conventions of English include many topics, so regardless of the score you give your student here, make sure that you are clearly identifying what they did well and what they need to work on. Do not focus all the feedback on spelling, grammar, or punctuation, unless it is clear that is a major part of their grade.</p>	<p>Identify one area for students to focus on. Provide feedback, return for revision, and continually support student growth. Regardless of the score, provide meaningful feedback to students.</p>