

Narration Essay Guidelines

Structuring a Narration Essay

A narration is simply the telling of a story. Whenever someone recounts an event or tells a story, he or she is using narration. A narration essay recounts an event or tells a story to illustrate an idea. A narration essay may be entertaining or informative. There are five basic steps to writing a narrative essay.

1. Purpose

Why are you telling the story? Every narration must have a point or purpose, usually to entertain or to inform.

2. Context

You should establish the context of your narrative early in the essay. You can follow these basic guidelines: who, what, where, when.

3. Point of View

A narrative essay may be written in the first-person (I) or third-person (he, she, it) point of view; do not use second person (you). If you were part of the action, the first-person provides the best perspective. If you are relating an event based upon other sources, use the third-person point of view. In some circumstances, you may be forced to choose the point of view (if, for example, you were a witness, but not a participant). Once you have decided upon a point of view, stay consistent with it.

4. Details

Include enough details for clarity; however, select only the facts that are relevant.

5. Organization

A narrative usually follows a chronological time line; however, you may find flashbacks a creative option as long as the narrative can be clearly followed by the reader. Most narratives are told in the past tense. You should keep tenses consistent.

Narration Sample

Title:

Do not underline, italicize, or boldface your own title. Note how the title complements the topic.

Introduction:

First paragraph tells who, what, where, and when. Thesis states author's purpose.

This narration is a first-person point of view (I).

Body paragraphs:

Note specific details. A narrative essay should have enough details to make it easy for the reader to follow the action. However, unnecessary details can detract from the story.

Body paragraphs:

Note the consistent use of tense (past) and chronological order.

Body paragraphs:

Note how effective use of dialogue adds to story.

Conclusion:

Final paragraph emphasizes the point of the narration.

Uncle Lou's Secret

It was a cool, crisp, New England day in the autumn of 1965, and I was in the middle of a strenuous football practice. For a sophomore, I was hard-hitting and 180 pounds, so the coaches were watching me closely. After fighting off blocks and crunching our star running back, which forced him to fumble, I heard the head coach yell, "You're starting at defensive end on Saturday!" My spirit was "pumped," and my ego was too. Both would be seriously deflated before the day's end. **Sometimes, life's better lessons are learned the hard way.**

My friend Paul, a senior, called to me, "Hey, Dave, c'mon over to my house after supper. Five of us are going to box."

"Okay," I said, "I'll be over there at 7:00."

We boxed in Paul's cellar a few times a week, and I prided myself on being able to trade punches with the "older guys." Importantly, nearly everyone on the team had heard the invitation, which enhanced my reputation with the upperclassmen.

By 8 P.M., I had won two fights (three two-minute rounds) and was about to fight our defensive tackle, who had also won twice. At that time, two men in their fifties descended the stairs. They reeked of scotch and cigars. I recognized Paul's dad, but I did not know his paunchy companion.

Paul asked, "Who wants to fight my Uncle Lou? How about you, Dave?"

"Why would I want to fight a fat, old man?" was my nearly silent response.

However, nearly silent was not silent enough; Uncle Lou had heard me, and he was putting on the gloves. Uncle Lou was three or four inches shorter than I but perhaps just as heavy -- thanks to a beer gut.

I was unimpressed as he took off his glasses and said, "C'mon punk; let's see your stuff."

I hated the word "punk," and now, regardless of his age and condition, I wanted to fight him. Moving toward him, I cranked up a huge right hand. As I threw it, I felt a succession of jabs pummeling my forehead, nose, and chin. Embarrassed and angry, I charged the "old man" and ran into a right hook that sent me reeling into the workbench.

I was bordering on unconsciousness, but I remember saying, "Who the hell is that guy?"

"He's my Uncle Lou," replied Paul with a grin. "Here, look at this," Paul ordered, and he handed me an almanac.

A few moments passed before my eyes could focus, but there it was, clearly printed for anyone to read -- "Lou Brouillard - 1931 Welterweight Champion of the World."

I had learned Uncle Lou's secret -- the hard way.

- David Bardsley

Note to students: This essay is a sample to illustrate format. Course instructors have copies. Duplication or near duplication would be regarded as plagiarism.