

Writing a Personal Narrative: A Significant, Memorable Experience

NARRATION (TSGW—CHPTS
2,14)

Purposes: Primary

To express yourself—narrate (tell a story about a memorable event that shaped and changed you in some way

- “Meaning” or significance for you (your thesis or main point): Explicit or Implicit thesis? Where will you put it? (See TSGW, Ch 13/your notes)
- Consider how an event affected your life. How has it changed your behavior? Your thoughts and feelings? Your attitude? Your perception of yourself, others, society, and the world?
- Analyze & evaluate your feelings, thoughts, emotions. Make readers think about a “familiar” experience/situation differently (avoid clichés or predictable morals). Conflict & resolution: What is your **specific** conflict? Does it lead to a resolution? Does your narrative have to present a clear-cut or absolute resolution?

Inform/Describe (Use descriptive details)

- Plot details/Organization--**dramatic arc** (TSGW, Ch 2)
- Convey thoughts/emotions by **showing** readers, not just telling them.

Purposes: Secondary

To entertain

- Connect to readers' interest in/knowledge about your topic. Give readers a fresh perspective about a familiar experience or introduce them to an unfamiliar experience. Highlight the universal elements of your personal experience.

To persuade

- Establish your credibility as a writer as well as the relevance and importance of your topic. What might readers learn from your experience?

Audience

You will complete and turn in, along with your personal narrative, an audience sheet for your personal narrative—See Course Notes

Use your assumptions about audience to determine your writing strategies/to shape your writing decisions

Consideration: Where might a personal narrative like yours be published?

Medium, Occasion, Genre, Context

Medium: 4 pages, double spaced. Turn in a print copy of the essay. Formatting—see Course Notes: Essay Formatting.

Include a heading, title, and page numbers.

Paragraphing for magazine—not a newspaper or website.

Genre—personal narrative. Conventions for personal narratives?

Occasion & Context: Is your topic part of a current debate or trend? What social and cultural factors frame your topic? Give it relevance or importance

Interest in personal narratives (storytelling) in our culture?

Writing Considerations

TSGW, Chpts 2, 14

Where will your information come from? Can you remember key details? Ask family members and/or friends to help with details?

What kind of thesis does a personal narrative have? Where does it go? See TSGW, Ch 13.

How should you organize your essay?

What key scenes should use descriptive details to show readers thoughts and emotions? (Ch 2, Ch 14: pp 475-82; 485-94)

What information/details do you include? Leave out? (Rhetorical situation: Use audience assumptions/medium—page limit)

Quotations or dialogue? This is real experience, not fiction. You can't make up dialogue, but dialogue is not mandatory. Research: How can you check into quotations and dialogue—see above?

Does your narrative connect to larger discussions about important or timely social issues? (Rhetorical situation—occasion & context)