

The Narrative Essay

A Narrative Essay means to tell a single story or several related stories. The story can be a means to an end, or a way to support a main idea. Narration should be powerful enough to capture the attention of the reader and should lend force to an argument, trigger the memory, or evoke places, times and people in a compelling and affecting way.

A Narrative Essay can do several things:

1. It can be used as support in another type of essay when a strong or emphatic point needs support.
2. In another type of essay it can be used to persuade an argument.
3. It can be used as a dominant pattern of development in an extended essay.

Strategies for writing a Narrative Essay:

1. The point of the Narrative conflict is identified. In the introductory paragraph, the significance or meaning of the conflict is conveyed effectively. Be sure there is a clear narrative point, or thesis.
2. Only the points that advance the narrative are developed. The focus of the essay is the narrative point and all other details are eliminated. A good narrative depends not only on what's included, but on what's left out.
3. Organized narrative sequence. Most commonly, chronological order should be maintained, but flashback and flashforward can be used.
4. The narrative is easy to follow. Each paragraph describes a distinct point that carries forward the flow of events. Each paragraph has a clear focus.
5. The narrative is vigorous and immediate. There is an abundance of specific details; the writer makes good use of vivid sensory detail.

For Instance:

"The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaf, winding all over the steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information." George Orwell, from *Shooting an Elephant*