

# Essential Elements of Narrative Essays

When you write a narrative essay, you are telling a story. Narrative essays are told from a defined point of view, often the author's, so there is feeling as well as specific and often sensory (details appealing to your senses) details provided to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. The narrative essay makes a point (see topic prompt) and that point is often defined in the opening sentence, but can also be found as the last sentence in the opening paragraph.

Since a narrative relies on personal experiences, it often is in the form of a story. When the writer uses this technique, he or she must be sure to include all the conventions of storytelling: plot (story told with introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and conclusion – see mind map), characters (details for imagery), setting (where it happens detailed), climax (the big bang), and an ending. It is usually filled with details that are carefully selected to explain, support, or embellish the story. All of the details relate to the main point the writer is attempting to make.

The focus of a narrative essay is the plot, which is told using enough details to build to a climax. Here's how:

- It is usually told chronologically.
- It usually has a purpose, which is usually stated in the opening paragraph.
- It may use dialogue. (but doesn't have to)
- Again, it is written with sensory details and vivid descriptions to involve the reader. All these details relate in some way to the main point the writer is making.
- Your words need to be vivid and colourful to help the reader feel the same feelings that you felt.
- You should make use of conflict and sequence like in any story.
- You may use flashbacks and flash forwards to help the story build to a climax.
- It is usually written in the first person, but third person may also be used.

\*Remember, a well-written narrative essay tells a story and makes a point.