

Introduction and Pretest

Your students should be familiar with the proofreading and technology skills in the beginning level of the Writer's Guide before beginning this unit.

Introduction

The pretest to determine whether your students are working at the beginning level of narrative writing should be administered and scored before the students are introduced to the content of the unit.

Introduce the students to the unit with an explanation like the following: **We're going to have fun learning to be authors who can write different kinds of stories. Sometimes authors work with other authors to make one piece of writing. Authors who write together work in a cooperative group. A cooperative writing group is a group of people who work together to make a piece of writing. They enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes we'll work cooperatively to write narratives. *Narrative* is a hard word that means "story." When we work together to write a narrative, I'll write our ideas and the story on paper for the whole class. Everyone will give ideas for our class stories.**

Sometimes authors work alone. After we practice together, you'll write a story of your own.

For the next few lessons, you'll be learning about narrative writing. A narrative is a story an author makes up or a story that tells about something that happened. When you write a narrative, you answer the question "What happened?" Personal narratives and problem-centered stories are examples of narrative writing. A personal narrative is a story about something that happened to the author. A problem-centered story is an imaginary story that tells about a problem a character or characters have and how the problem is solved. Sometimes personal narratives also have a problem that's solved. We call the people or animals in a story the characters.

Beginning Writing Sample

PREPARATION Write the following starter on the board: Think about an experience you've had with an animal. The animal might be your pet, someone else's pet, or another animal. Write a story telling what happened.

Each student will need lined paper, drawing paper, and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep assignments.

Explain to the students that before they learn about writing narratives, you'd like a sample of their writing. Tell them you'll save these samples so you and they can see how their writing improves as they learn more about narrative writing.

Read aloud the starter on the board. Ask the students to think of an animal to write about. Have them recall what happened that makes them remember the experience. Tell the students they may make a plan for their personal narratives if they wish. Have the students write their stories on lined paper, telling what happened to them and to the animal. Remind them to include important details in their stories to make them interesting. **If you want, you may give your story a title.**

Allow the students time to write. Ask them to check their stories to see if there's anything they want to add or fix. Have them write final copies and illustrate one important part. Evaluate the students' writing using the rubric on the following page.

RUBRIC

Pretest

Posttest

Scoring the Samples

- Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emergent or minimum level.
- Give the student a score of 3 for each element at a satisfactory level.
- Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the mastery level.

Evaluating the Elements of Narrative Writing		
	The author of this personal narrative . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Includes a beginning paragraph.	
	Includes one or more middle paragraphs.	
	Includes an ending paragraph.	
	Includes a chronological sequence of events.	
	Chooses a title appropriate to the story.	
C O N T E N T	Includes a setting that tells where the story takes place.	
	Includes a setting that tells when the story takes place.	
	States the problem.	
	States a solution to the problem.	
	Describes the character's feelings.	
S T Y L E	Maintains a consistent point of view in the first person.	
	Uses a variety of sentence beginnings.	
	Uses adjectives to describe nouns.	
	Uses adverbs that tell how, when, where, and why.	
	Illustrates the story by drawing a picture that matches the content.	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Capitalizes <i>I</i> , first and last names, and the first word of sentences.	
	Uses correct punctuation to end declarative and interrogative sentences.	
	Indents paragraphs.	
	Uses past-tense verbs correctly.	
Total Points		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the intermediate level of Narrative Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the beginning level of Narrative Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the placement test for <i>Language for Learning</i> , an SRA program, or place the student in a lower-level language program.