

Introduction and Pretest

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

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

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

Introduction

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 many different kinds of stories. Sometimes authors work with other authors to produce one piece of writing. A group of people who work together to produce a piece of writing is called a cooperative writing group. The authors enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes we'll work cooperatively to write a narrative. When we work together to write a narrative, I'll write our ideas and the story on a chart for the class. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class story.*

Sometimes authors work alone. After we practice together, you'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next few lessons, you'll be learning about narrative writing. A narrative is a story that tells about an event. When you write a narrative, you answer the question "What happened?" Personal narratives and problem-centered stories are examples of narrative writing. Personal narratives are stories that tell about your own experiences. They tell about something that's happened to you. In a problem-centered story, the characters have a problem, and the story is about what they do to solve their problem. The end of a problem-centered story tells how the characters' problem was solved.

Beginning Writing Sample

PREPARATION Write the following starter on the board: *One day while walking in the woods, a child found a bumblebee as big as a pony and decided to keep it as a pet. Tell what happened to both the child and the bumblebee before the child returned it to the forest.*

Explain to the students that before they learn about writing narratives, you'd like to have 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 about the problems a child might have with a pet bumblebee as big as a pony. What would the child's family say? What would his or her friends do when they saw the bumblebee? Ask the students to write a problem-centered story on lined paper, telling what happened to both the child and the bumblebee before the child returned it to the forest. Allow the students time to write. Ask them to edit, proofread, and write a final copy of the story. 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 a Piece of Narrative Writing		
	The author of this problem-centered story . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Has an introductory paragraph (beginning).	
	Uses several related paragraphs to develop the plot (middle).	
	Has a concluding paragraph that provides a resolution to the problem (ending).	
	Follows a logical sequence of events.	
	Has an attention-grabbing title related to the story.	
C O N T E N T	Includes details about the setting (where and when the story takes place).	
	Develops the characters by describing both physical appearance and personality traits.	
	States the problem clearly.	
	Presents more than one attempt to solve the problem.	
	Presents a logical and reasonable solution to the problem.	
S T Y L E	Uses temporal transition words to develop the chronological sequence of the story.	
	Uses descriptive words to bring characters and setting to life.	
	Maintains a balance between narrative and dialogue.	
	Uses a variety of sentence structures.	
	Uses figurative language (similes, onomatopoeia, alliteration).	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses correct capitalization in direct quotations.	
	Uses quotation marks to indicate that someone is speaking.	
	Uses commas and other punctuation correctly in direct quotations.	
	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Uses regular and irregular plurals correctly.	
Total Points		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the advanced level of Narrative Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the intermediate level of Narrative Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the pretest for the beginning level of Narrative Writing.