

OK, so your teacher has given you yet another crummy writing assignment! For what seems like the thousandth time, you have to write a narrative. We're talking another story. Let's see... how to begin... There are always the old standbys...

I am going to tell you about... or This is a story about...



Can you say **BORING!!!**

How to Write a [More] Interesting Narrative

Obviously, you need to choose an interesting topic. I can't help you with that part – that's all up to you. But, I can make some suggestions for how to make any topic that you write about more interesting...

It all starts with a good beginning...

You have to hook your reader right from the start. If the reader isn't intrigued by the first sentence, he or she won't keep reading (at least not willingly).

Every paragraph needs a *lead sentence* – a sentence that introduces the topic (the subject of the paragraph) and may even hint at the main idea (what you want to say about the subject). Topic and main idea are different.

Example:

Topic – pizza; Two Main Ideas - I am crazy about pizza **or** I despise pizza

A lead sentence must grab your reader's attention and make them want to read more. Strong opening sentences often ask a question, make a surprising statement, or may even use dialog. The sentence starters at the top of the page do none of these things and fail entirely to capture the reader's curiosity.

Did my somewhat surprising way of beginning this "tutorial" get you to take notice and read further? Would you have been as interested if I had started, "I am going to try to teach you about how to write a good narrative...?" The same, unexciting topic either way – but at least I choose to use a more appealing opening 😊

Ms. Weaver has compiled a list of high-quality sentence starters and has graciously allowed me to include them here. Before I do, however, I have one more thought for you to think about at this point... if you have something interesting to say then you should use interesting words to say it – use a Thesaurus! I'll probably say more about interesting words before my little essay is complete... but here is the list that I promised you:

[More] Interesting Sentence Starters	
It is amazing to think that...	Would you believe...
Let me explain...	So, what about...
You'll be excited to learn...	Incredibly,...
Do you realize...	It is true that...
Have you ever thought...	So, you want to understand...
Have you ever wondered...	Why do...
Let me tell you about...	How can...
Of course, most people agree...	When do...
Actually,...	Where can...
It is interesting to note...	How do(es)...
In a funny sort of way...	Most people believe...
Surprising,...	Of course,...
Nowadays,...	Often times...
It's incredible...	For years...
Sometimes...	Now that...
By the way...	It's hard to believe...
You'd better believe...	You will find...
You'll soon see...	Have you ever...
You'll soon discover...	Don't you think...
Wouldn't you agree...	No one will argue that...
Certainly,...	Without a doubt...
Positively,...	Truly,...
Normally,...	In the first place...
Finally...	Imagine...
Experts agree that...	First of all...
Let me fill you in on...	In many ways...
There are many reasons why...	So, why is/are...
There are many ways in which...	What's so great about...
Interestingly enough...	Suppose that you...
Let's take a look at...	Do you remember when...
It all began when...	Try to visualize...
Have you ever seen...	Are you aware that...
It is fascinating to learn about...	You may be surprised to learn that...
Amazingly,...	Strangely enough,...
Unquestionably,...	Indeed,...
Surely,...	Most people are unfamiliar with...
Typically...	Experience shows that...
In my experience...	Most people agree that...

It Really Needs a Powerful Middle...

You've formulated the perfect lead sentence, and now your reader is eagerly anticipating what happens next. You'd better be able to deliver... and that means *supporting sentences* – sentences that describe details about the main idea by answering the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? And How?

Supporting sentences should only provide details connected with your narrative's main idea. While it may be fascinating to you that your Uncle Bob can touch his nose with his tongue, if it isn't related to your main idea then the reader just doesn't need to know about it. Save Uncle Bob and his disgusting habits for another narrative.

In addition, **your details should be as specific as you can make them.** Use exact nouns and descriptive adjectives. Vary your word usage by looking up synonyms (words that have the same or similar meanings) in a thesaurus – there is almost always more than one way to say what you want to say.

Let's return to Uncle Bob for a few seconds, as much as I hate to learn more about him... You could write that you have a relative who can touch his nose with his tongue. Not very specific or detailed or even very informative for that matter. It would be slightly better to mention this relative by name as done the first time we met Uncle Bob up above – at least we know who this mysterious and slightly gross relative is. You could improve even further by adding some dramatic and vivid adjectives to describe bizarre and vulgar Uncle Bob.

Finally, **since most events actually happen in a particular order, you should tell them in that same sequential order and use transitional words and phrases that help your reader understand the passage of time.** Be specific and to vary your word choice.

Example Transition Words and Phrases (examples)

First	Next	Last	This morning	In September
Second	Then	Finally	In addition	On Tuesday
Third	Also	Before	Now	At 3:15
Later	Yesterday	After	Meanwhile	Last summer

It Has to Come to an End Sometime...

Sooner or later, you get to the point where you have said all that you want to say about your topic. A *closing sentence* wraps up your narrative by bringing it around full circle to a restatement of your lead sentence. Tell the reader how the story ends. State your main idea again, using different words (time to pull out that thesaurus again ☺).

The Final Hurdle: From Paragraph to Essay

Stop... Take a deep breathe... Whatever you do, don't panic! To move from a one paragraph narrative to a more comprehensive narrative essay, just scale up everything we've discussed so far – instead of a lead sentence, you have a lead paragraph; instead of supporting sentences, you have supporting paragraphs; and instead of a closing sentence, you have a closing paragraph.

Each individual paragraph follows the same basic recipe that you use for a simple narrative paragraph – lead sentence, supporting sentences, and closing sentence. Don't forget to still use those transition words and phrases...

Other Types of Writing...

You probably know that narrative is not the only form of writing. There are also expository papers (explains something – this “tutorial” is intended to explain/teach you something about the writing process, so it would be considered expository) and opinion/persuasive essays (express your opinions about a topic and/or attempt to convince/persuade others to your way of thinking). And we can't forget research papers... just wait until middle school, high school, and college 😊.

Regardless of the intent of your writing, everything I have said above still applies. Start with a strong opening, follow with solid support, and tie it all up at the end and you will at least have a well written and [more] interesting paper.

A Personal Pet Peeve...

Please give the reader some credit for having a brain and don't insult him or her by ending your beautifully crafted narrative with the obvious:

The End

Of course it's the end! You carefully drafted a breathtaking closing that brought your narrative to an obvious and clear conclusion. If you hadn't intended that to be “the end,” you would have kept on writing and would still, even now, be writing and writing and writing and writing...

And Finally... About Uncle Bob and Other Such Nonsense...

I personally do not have an Uncle Bob or even know an Uncle Bob who can touch his tongue to his nose. I do have an amusing daughter, Katie, however...

Disclaimers:

I hereby guarantee that if you follow the guidelines put forth in this tutorial you will have a more interesting paper than if you don't. I do not guarantee you will have a fascinating paper, only a more exciting paper. Making it remarkable is still up to you.

I do not condone or recommend any actions related to trying to touch your nose with your tongue, but make no promise that I won't giggle heartily while watching you attempt this ridiculous deed.