

3.4 - First Half of Your Personal Narrative

OPENER - Look at the rubric for the New York Times Personal Narrative Contest, which I will use to grade your project, and which the NYTimes will use to determine winners.

The New York Times



Story: Personal narrative tells a short but memorable story about a life experience — and communicates some larger meaning or universal message.

Language: Personal narrative uses vivid details and images to make the story come alive for the reader. The writing avoids clichés.

Voice: Personal narrative demonstrates a unique personal voice, style and point of view. The story is fresh and original.

Narrative Arc: Personal narrative presents a clear conflict — an obstacle, problem or tension — that is resolved in some way.

Guidelines: Entry follows all contest rules and guidelines.

Guidelines: No more than 600 words!

1. Which part of this rubric seems easiest for you to do well with?

Narrative arc I feel like the experience was really clear and I think it was resolved.

2. Which part seems most important, and why?

The language because the details are super important to put people in your shoes.

3. Which part of the rubric seems most challenging?

Keeping the story short and simple but still describing what happened and how I grew from there.

CLASS ACTIVITY - Our Writing Schedule and the Arc of a Story

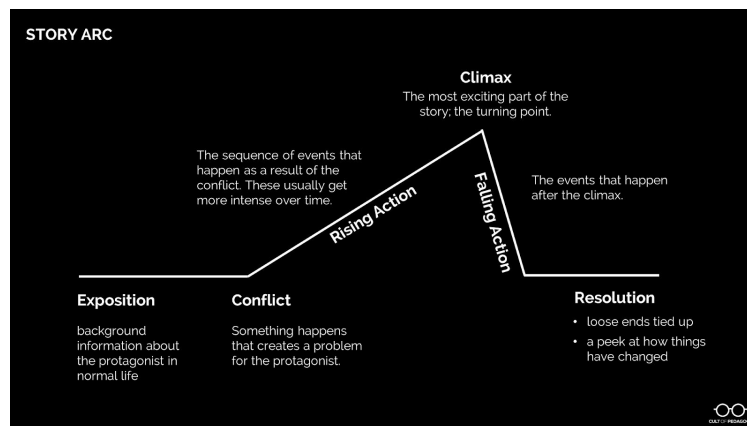
Writing Schedule // Deadlines:

Monday, November 9th - Exposition, Conflict, and Rising Action (first half of draft due)

Thursday, November 12th - Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution (completed draft due)

Monday, November 16th - Incorporate Feedback from Ms. Nataliya and Revise (final draft due)

Tuesday, November 17th - Final day to submit your personal narrative to the [New York Times Youth Personal Narrative Contest](#)



Example of Exposition, Conflict, and Rising Action

At Jitney Jungle, you filled our cart with cream of mushroom soup, tuna, name-brand wheat bread, and a big bottle of off-brand cranberry juice. I asked you if I could get the latest issue of *Right On!* magazine because Salt-N-Pepa were on the cover. You told me you'd get me a subscription to the magazine in a few months when I turned 13, so I just read it while we waited in line. When we walked up to the checkout, I put all the food on the conveyor belt and watched it glide away from us. Behind the cashier, pinned to a board, were a number of checks and Xeroxes of licenses, with the words DO NOT ACCEPT NAN CHECK FROM THESE CUSTOMERS in all caps. A Xerox of your license and one of your checks from Trustmark was in the middle of the board. Your check looked like the undisputed champion of bounced checks at Jitney Jungle.

What makes this a strong opening? What does the exposition reveal? What is the conflict?

They used the words "you" making it seem like he's talking to the reader. The exposition reveals that they didn't have a lot of money. The conflict is since they didn't have money the store told employees not to accept checks from them.

Plan Your Opening

HOOK - how will you grab the reader's attention right away?

As the noises of rollercoasters and screams faded away, we walked back to our car speaking in our first language about the food we just ate and the fun we just had. But we noticed you continued to look back and stare until finally you decided enough was enough. You turned, "This is America, you need to speak English. Nobody else is speaking a different language. You could be talking about me for all I know"

EXPOSITION - what essential information does the reader need to know in the beginning?

We are leaving six flags and we are having a conversation on how we need to come more often together because it was so much fun. We're almost to the parking lot and we notice the family a couple feet away from us continue to turn around and look at us whenever we spoke.

CONFLICT - what is the conflict/problem in your piece, and how will you reveal it to the reader?

The women decided to tell us that since we were in America we couldn't speak spanish. Telling us that English is what is supposed to be spoken in America because not everyone understands Spanish.

RISING ACTION - what will happen next in response to the conflict, leading to the climax?

We left six flags in silence and in the later days, weeks and months I refused to speak spanish and I would feel ashamed whenever my grandparents said something in spanish.