

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

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.

Guidelines: No more than 600 words!

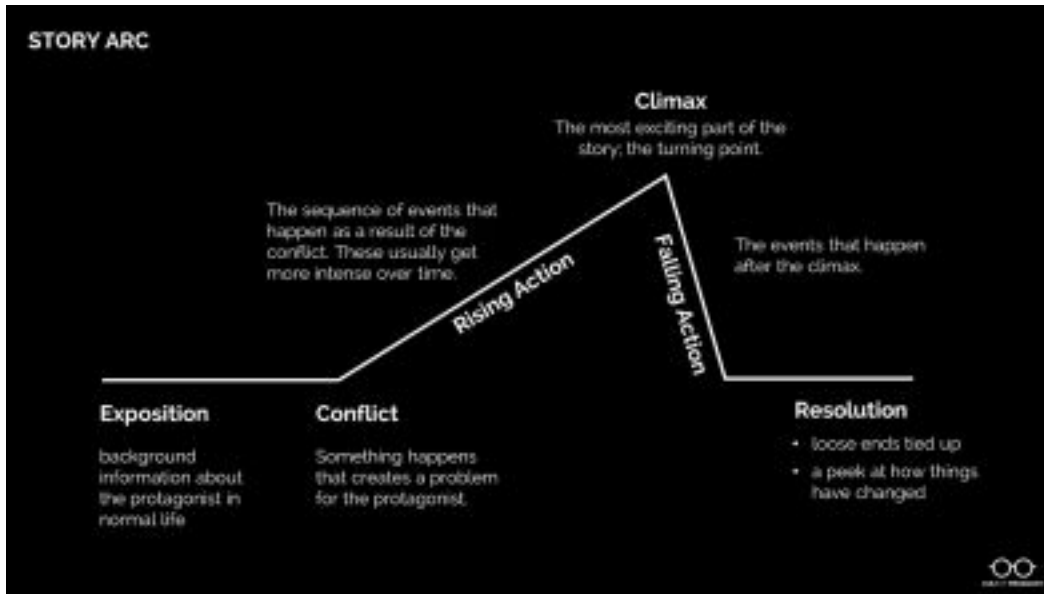
1. Which part of this rubric seems easiest for you to do well with?

2. Which part seems most important, and why?

3. Which part of the rubric seems most challenging?

CLASS ACTIVITY - The Arc of a Story

Today's Focus: Exposition, Conflict, and Rising Action



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?

Plan Your Opening
HOOK - how will you grab the reader's attention right away?
EXPOSITION - what essential information does the reader need to know in the beginning?
CONFLICT - what is the conflict/problem in your piece, and how will you reveal it to the reader?
RISING ACTION - what will happen next in response to the conflict, leading to the climax?

INDEPENDENT WORK: Now that you have done some planning, write the first half of your piece. Reminder, your completed piece cannot be longer than 600 words (about one page single spaced). So, the first half of your piece (your hook, exposition, conflict, and rising action) should be about 300 words.