

### Our narrative writing focuses:

1. The importance of writing short, memorable stories.
2. Showing instead of telling
3. Dialogue writing
4. Dropping into the action
5. Making sure there's a narrative arc
6. Ensuring the point is clearly made

We are going to start with the first 2:

### The importance of writing short, memorable stories

- Stories, particularly personal ones, are powerful. We learn about the writer, and we learn about who we are through reading them.
- Storytelling helps us understand empathy because it teaches about relationships. It helps us understand the sagas that connect history.
- To foster creative thought
- To develop a better understanding of language: how to use it and how to read it
- To become a better, more critical reader
- For many of you, this is a skill that you will need when writing college application essays: you need to be memorable, demonstrate your writing/thinking skills, and you have a limited number of words in which to do it.
- For the business world. Great stories help leaders, managers and employees understand mission, vision, and values.

### How do you do it?

- **Don't try to fit your whole life into one story.**
- **Know it's ok not to tell the whole story. This is HUGE.**
- **Tell a small story — an evocative, particular moment.**
- **Better to start from something very simple that you think is interesting (an incident, a person) and expand upon it, rather than a large idea that you then have to fit into a short essay. For**

**example, start with “when I found out I was getting my first puppy” rather than “every pet I’ve ever owned.”**

- **Don’t discount the seemingly mundane. Everyone has stories. It doesn’t have to be about the time you scaled a mountain. Making brownies with your brother might end up making a really cool narrative.**

### **Show, don’t tell**

- The technique of using more descriptive, emotional language to create your story versus just saying the events that happened in order.

Ex: I was so tired. (TELLING)

My eyes kept crossing and my head slipping off my hand as I tried to focus on what my teacher was saying. (SHOWING)

It was late fall. (TELLING)

Leaves crunched beneath his feet. (SHOWING)

- Creates more interest, more investment in your story, pulling readers in and helping them relate.
- For shorter works (what you’re doing here), it’s going to be important to remember what parts to expand/compress.
- Need further help with this or want to know more? Check out this brief [video](#).

### **How do you do it?**

- **Use precise words**
- **Consider sensory details**
- **Create moments through description**
- **Play with figurative language**
- **Try dialogue or internal monologue**

**Note the differences:**

**Expository writing - exposes/explains/informs**

**There are many times in my life I felt scared. One of the times I can remember is when my sister got bit by a dog when we were riding our bikes. Another time I felt afraid was when I went to the dentist to get teeth pulled. I still get nervous at the dentist. Finally, the last time I remember being scared was when I was babysitting at the neighbor's house and I thought I heard sounds outside.**

- **It's expository because it is explaining the times the writer felt scared. Even if the writer added in a few details for each instance, it would still just be explaining.**

**Narrative writing - tells a story/puts readers into moments**

***Go get mom!* It was really more of an instinct than a thought. A blur followed by a scream, and my sister's bike twisted under her. We rode our bikes all the time. We passed this house all the time. Why now? *Must. Get. Mom.***

**Or**

**You know you're a product of the 80s when your main mode of transportation was a Huffy. Oh yes, the one with the banana seat and the streamers that eventually got picked out one by one until the handlebars were bald. We were riding our prized possessions that fateful night that changed everything.**

