

Lesson 2

Guided Group
ActivityPlanning and Drafting a
Personal Narrative

Writer's Warm-Up

When we count things, we count in order. If I had five things to count, I would say, "One, two, three, four, five." I wouldn't say, "One, three, five, two, four." When I say the first three days of the week in order, I say, "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday." I don't say, "Tuesday, Monday, Wednesday."

When authors write stories, it's important that what happens in the story follow an order that makes sense.

Today we're going to stretch our minds by playing a game called Put It in Order. I'm going to tell you some short stories that don't make sense because the events in the story aren't in the correct order. Listen carefully to each story, and get ready to tell me what's wrong.

When Peter got up in the morning, he brushed his teeth, put on his pajamas, and went to bed. What's wrong with this story? Ideas: *Peter wouldn't put on his pajamas and go to bed in the morning. He would put on his clothes and eat breakfast. In the evening, Peter would brush his teeth, put on his pajamas, and go to bed.*

On Tuesday night, La Donya did her homework that was due the next day. On Saturday, she turned in her homework to her teacher. What's wrong with this story? Ideas: *If her homework was due the next day, she would turn it in on Wednesday. There's no school on Saturday.*

Martin's birthday party is on Saturday, the first of March. Lisa brought a present to Martin on Saturday, the first of September. What's wrong with this story? Idea: *If Martin's birthday is on the first of March, Lisa would bring the present on the first of March, not the first of September.*

Dad cooks breakfast every morning. He always calls us to come eat at seven o'clock in the evening. What's wrong with this story? Idea: *He would call them to breakfast at seven o'clock in the morning.*

First, Judy went to the grocery store. At last, she was home. On her way home from the grocery store, she filled her car with gas. What's wrong with this story? Idea: *Filling the car with gas happened before Judy got home.*

You're very good at figuring out what is out of order in a story.

Writer's Workshop

Getting Started

PREPARATION Make a transparency of BLM 1B.

Read the students the following starter: Let's think back to the first day of school this year. We didn't know each other very well, did we? We all wondered what this year would be like and what would happen on our first day together.

Explain to the students that today the class is going to work cooperatively to plan and write a personal narrative that tells about the students' common experiences on the first day of school. Because we're writing a personal narrative, we should focus on something that actually happened and tell a story about ourselves.

Point out to the students that most authors think about what they want to write and make plans before they begin. We'll think about what happened that first day of school, and then we'll make a plan to help us organize our ideas before we begin writing.

Review the following concepts with the students:

- A personal narrative has a title that captures the reader's attention and makes him or her want to read more. The title should relate to the narrative.
- A personal narrative begins with an opening paragraph. The first sentence of the opening paragraph grabs the reader's attention and draws the reader into the story. The characters and the setting are often introduced in the opening paragraph.

- The plot tells what happens in the middle of the story. The middle paragraphs of a personal narrative tell the plot, the problems, and how the characters try to solve the problems.
- The last paragraph of a personal narrative brings the story to a satisfying conclusion. It often gives the solution to the problems and the characters' feelings about the solution.
- The special message from the author to the reader is called the theme.

Brainstorming

Explain to the students that they're going to brainstorm. *When we brainstorm, we think of as many ideas as we can. I'll list them on the board. Let's think of some things that were worrying you or problems you had as you started the first day of school this year.* List the responses on the board. Allow three or four minutes for brainstorming. Encourage the students to give their ideas freely. Ask the students to vote for three problems to write about in this personal narrative. Circle their choices.

Display BLM 1B on the overhead. Have the class brainstorm possible titles for this personal narrative, and write them on the board. Ask the students to choose, by a show of hands, which title to use. Write the selected title on the graphic organizer.

Remind the students that the first sentence of the opening paragraph should grab the reader's attention and draw the reader into the story. *Some authors use questions or exclamations for their opening sentences. Other authors start with sounds or actions. Still others start with thoughts or dialogue. Sometimes authors put two or more ideas together to write a good opening sentence.* Read the opening sentence from the personal narrative "Silver Dart": *As I prepared to dive into the water more than thirty feet below, a final thought screamed in my head, "How did I ever get myself into this mess?"* What did the author use to get our attention? Idea: *Thought in dialogue.* Tell us an opening sentence we could use for our class personal narrative. Accept two or three reasonable responses, and write them on the board. If a student gives an incomplete sentence, rephrase the response as a complete sentence. Ask the students to choose, by a show of hands, which sentence to use. Write the selected opening sentence on the graphic organizer.

Remind the students that the main characters and the setting are often included in the opening paragraph. Have the students identify the main characters in this personal narrative. Ideas: *The students, the teacher.* On the graphic organizer, write the word *students* in one of the character circles and your name in the other. Ask the students to suggest words for you to write around each circle to tell about the characters. If the students use only physical characteristics, encourage them to add personality attributes by asking leading questions such as these: *What feelings did you have? What does this tell you about the kind of people you are as a class?* Explain to the students that a character's physical characteristics are what you would see if you took a photograph of that person, such as the color of the person's hair or eyes. Point out that personality attributes tell how a character acts, for example, whether he or she is a mean person or a kind person.

Discuss the setting with the students, entering the name of your school in the setting circle. Ask the students for words and phrases that describe your school or classroom. Add these around the setting circle.

Remind the students that the plot tells what happens. *The middle paragraphs of a personal narrative tell the problem or problems and how the characters try to solve them.* Discuss the plot with the students, entering key words in each box on the story map, following a plan similar to this:

Box 1: first day of school

Box 2: worried

Box 3: first selected brainstormed idea

Box 4: solution to the first problem

Box 5: second selected brainstormed idea

Box 6: solution to the second problem

Box 7: third selected brainstormed idea

Box 8: solution to the third problem

The final paragraph of a personal narrative usually gives the solution to the main problem and the characters' feelings about the solution. Complete the story map.

Box 9: summary of problems solved

Box 10: feelings of the students

Discuss with the students the special message they want to give the reader.

Remind the students that the last paragraph of a personal narrative often brings the story to a satisfying conclusion. Have the students suggest closing sentences to use for the class personal narrative. Accept two or three reasonable responses from the students, and write them on the board. If a student gives an incomplete sentence, rephrase the response as a complete sentence. Ask the students to choose, by a show of hands, which sentence to use. Write the selected closing sentence on the graphic organizer.

Drafting a Class Narrative

PREPARATION You'll need chart paper and the completed BLM 1B.

Display the completed BLM 1B. In this part of the lesson, you'll write the class narrative on chart paper. Leave spaces between lines for editing. *Now we're ready to begin writing the class personal narrative. On chart paper, I'll write our title on the first line and center it on the page. Then I'll begin our personal narrative with the opening sentence we chose. I'll indent the first word of the paragraph. An indent is a small space before the first word that shows we're starting a new paragraph.* Show how to indent the first word of a paragraph as you write the opening sentence on chart paper.

Point to the setting circle on the graphic organizer. *Give me a detail sentence we could use to describe our classroom.* Accept two or three responses from the students. Record them on the chart paper. If a student gives an incomplete sentence, rephrase the response as a complete sentence. You may use more than one sentence to describe the classroom.

Point to the character circles on the graphic organizer. Point to the circle labeled "students." *Give me a sentence we could use to describe the students.* Accept two or three responses from the students describing physical appearance. Write them on the chart paper. Accept two or three responses from the students describing personality attributes. Write them on the chart paper. You may use more than one sentence for each characteristic. Repeat the process for the character circle labeled with your name.

Remind the students that an opening paragraph often ends with a statement of the problem. Help the students summarize the main problem by making a statement such as this: *All the problems we wrote on our organizer could be grouped together. Try to make one sentence that summarizes the three problems.* Idea: *Everyone was worried about being in a new class with a new teacher.* Write the sentence on the chart paper.

Now we're ready to write our second paragraph. Tell me a sentence that expresses the problem we listed in Box 3. Write the response on the chart paper. *I'll indent the first word of this paragraph. An indent is a small space before the first word that shows we're starting a new paragraph.* Demonstrate as you write the first sentence of the paragraph.

Tell me a sentence that describes how we felt when we discovered that problem. Write the response on the chart paper. *Tell me how we solved that problem.* Accept two or three responses from the students. Write the responses on the chart paper.

Continue with this teaching sequence to write the third and fourth paragraphs, using leading questions to elicit sentences that express the problem, how the class felt about the problem, and how the class solved the problem. Remind the students that the first word of each new paragraph should be indented.

Now we're ready to write our final paragraph. Tell me the sentence we wrote in the first paragraph that summarized the three problems we had. Idea: *Everyone was worried about being in a new class with a new teacher.* Tell me that idea, but use different words. Write the response on the chart paper as the first sentence of the last paragraph.

Now let's reread the sentences from the middle paragraphs that tell how we solved each problem. Tell us a sentence that combines those ideas in one sentence. Write the response on the chart paper. Next we need a sentence that tells how we felt by the end of the first day of school. Accept two or three responses from the students. Write the responses on the chart paper. Finally we need a closing sentence to bring our narrative to a satisfying conclusion. Remember that *conclusion* is another word for *end*. That sentence is on our graphic organizer.

Ask a student to read the sentence aloud while you write it on the chart paper.

Read the entire story with the students. Praise them for their hard work in completing the first draft of the class narrative. Tell them that the following day the class will work together to edit what they've written.

Writer's Workout

PREPARATION Each student will need a copy of BLM 2.

Explain to the students that the Writer's Workout will help them practice and become proficient at various writing skills. **When you're proficient at a skill, you can do that skill easily. You're an expert at that skill.** Have each student complete BLM 2 to reinforce the concepts of temporal order and substitutes for *asked*.

Ask a student to read the instructions for each part aloud. Explain any unfamiliar terms or vocabulary. If this task seems particularly difficult for your students, read the instructions to them as they follow along, and complete the first item of each part as a guided task.

After the students have completed the Writer's Workout, review and discuss the answers with them.

Name _____ Date _____

Writer's Workout **BLM 2**

Part 1 These stories don't make sense because the events in each story are not in the correct order. Explain what is incorrect.

1. Doug loves to play basketball on the weekends. He meets his friends on Saturday to play basketball in the park. The next day, Wednesday, they go back to play another game.
What's wrong with this story? The next day would be Sunday, not Wednesday.

2. Sharon has lots of fun during summer vacation. In July, she swims every day. In December, she goes to summer camp.
What's wrong with this story? December is not a summer month.

3. First, Tammy took the eggs out of the refrigerator. Fifth, she broke the eggs into the bowl. Third, she scrambled them and cooked them in a pan.
What's wrong with this story? Fifth should be second.

Part 2 Use a different word for *asked*. Write the new sentence on the lines.

1. "Do you know Sadie's phone number?" the secretary asked.
Idea: "Do you know Sadie's phone number?" the secretary inquired.

2. "Have you seen my umbrella?" I asked.
Idea: "Have you seen my umbrella?" I questioned.

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Graphic Organizer for a Personal Narrative

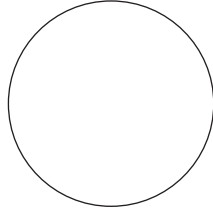
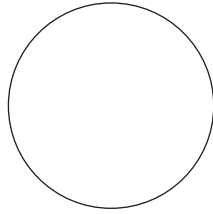
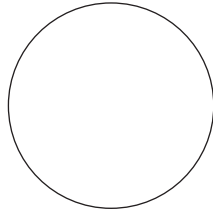
BLM 1B

Title _____

Beginning _____

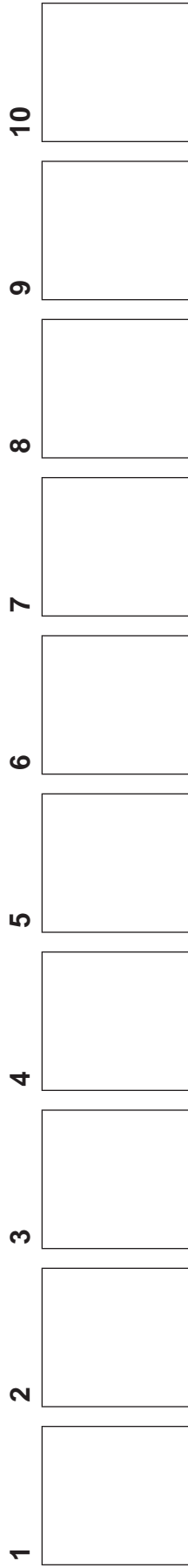
Opening Sentence _____

Characters/Setting



Middle

Plot Diagram _____



Ending

Closing Sentence _____

Writer's Workout

BLM 2

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1. Doug loves to play basketball on the weekends. He meets his friends on Saturday to play basketball in the park. The next day, Wednesday, they go back to play another game.

What's wrong with this story? _____

2. Sharon has lots of fun during summer vacation. In July, she swims every day. In December, she goes to summer camp.

What's wrong with this story? _____

3. First, Tammy took the eggs out of the refrigerator. Fifth, she broke the eggs into the bowl. Third, she scrambled them and cooked them in a pan.

What's wrong with this story? _____

Part 2 Use a different word for *asked*. Write the new sentence on the lines.

1. "Do you know Sadie's phone number?" the secretary asked.

2. "Have you seen my umbrella?" I asked.
