

# Lesson Skill: Strategies for organization and elaboration of personal narrative

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**Strand** Writing

**SOL** 3.9

4.7

5.7

## Materials

- Personal narrative organizer
- Definition of *personal narrative* from SOL 4.7: “Students write narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or events, using descriptive details and clear event sequences.”
- Sample narrative essay
- Short list of personal narrative ideas
- Chart paper and markers
- Enlarged personal narrative graphic organizer
- Students’ personal narrative drafts (completed in advance of this lesson)
- Revision checklist
- Fragmented, familiar story, minus details important to the central idea of the story (*Little Red Riding Hood, Three Little Pigs, etc.*)
- “Building Blocks”
  - When: Yesterday the baby cried.
  - Size or Age: Yesterday the three-month-old baby cried.
  - Name a Place: Yesterday the three-month-old baby cried in the apartment next door.
  - Add a Name: Yesterday Sam’s three-month-old baby cried in the apartment next door.
  - Add a Time Frame: Yesterday Sam’s three-month-old baby cried in the apartment next door for hours.

## Lesson

1. To begin the lesson, select a draft of a personal narrative or an excerpt of one. Invite students to share the process they used to complete a first draft of their own personal narrative. Ask them to explain how they used their graphic organizer, how they decided which ideas to include, and if they read and rewrote as they were composing. Explain that writers revise to make their writing stronger and revision is part of the writing process. Add that revision can occur more than once before a final draft is completed.
2. Provide students with a copy of a revision checklist and the sample narrative. Review the revision checklist with students. Read your draft of your personal narrative to students as they follow along.
3. First Reading—While reading, have students underline ideas and details that do not make sense or words that could be stronger. Also have them identify sentences that may need

to be moved to different sections (orange— introduction, green—body, and red— conclusion). Remind students that word choice and sentence fluency are traits of good writing that help readers make pictures in their mind about the story.

4. Second Reading—While reading, invite students to share which ideas and details indicate the sentences that need to be moved or deleted. Use the revision checklist to model how to revise the draft of your personal narrative. Remind students that revising includes shifting, adding, substituting, and/or deleting information.

#### Elaboration

5. Introduce the concept of elaboration. Read a fragmented, familiar story, and ask students what is missing. Then read the original. Discuss which version makes more sense, is more interesting, and why. Explain that elaborating and creating a complete picture for the reader is an important step in narrative writing.
6. Model how to elaborate in writing. Write the following “building block” headers on the board: WHEN, SIZE or AGE, NAME A PLACE, ADD A NAME, and ADD A TIME FRAME. Then write the simple sentences underneath each heading (see Materials above). Expand the sentence as a class by adding one building block at a time. Record each new sentence on the board. Write a new basic sentence on the board, and ask students to practice using the building blocks on their own.
7. Have students use their revision checklist to confirm that their writing has all the elements on the checklist. They should revise their personal narrative by shifting, adding, substituting, or deleting information. Students may also peer edit.

#### Strategies for Differentiation

- Use graphic organizers and revision checklists so that students are able to find one that suits the lesson as well as their learning styles.
- Talk to students about elaboration, and have them elaborate on simple nouns such as coat, chair, tree, etc. Help them see that more elaboration and description paint a picture for the reader.
- Allow students to work in pairs.
- Provide written material in audio format.
- When possible, have pictures and other visual support available.