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Introduction

“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”
- Ernest Hemingway

Most people who have attempted to write papers, short stories, college applications, books, newspaper articles, letters, and even notes on greeting cards can identify with Ernest Hemingway’s words. The goal of this book is to equip third, fourth, and fifth graders with the tools they need to help them with the writing process.

Using the writing process as shown on page iv, three types of writing will be addressed: narrative writing, opinion writing, and informative writing. Lessons and activities will be presented with examples and explanations to aid teachers and parents who are guiding young writers. Rubrics are also provided to help evaluate the writing.

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and then starting on the first one.”

- Mark Twain

The 5-Step Writing Process on page iv will be used to separate the big task of writing into smaller tasks that are manageable.

About The Author

Noreen Conte taught reading, writing, language arts, and spelling for more than thirty years. Through the years, she gathered ideas to help students become better writers. Conte’s goal in this series is to equip students with the tools they need to help them with the writing process. The Five-Step Writing Process is used to separate the big task of writing into smaller tasks that are manageable.

As a teacher, Conte enjoyed creating lesson plans and activities to motivate and challenge students. She is happy she found another way to do this through her writing. Her other books published by The Critical Thinking Co.™ are Language Smarts E™ and Jumbles: Prefixes, Suffixes, and Compound Words.

1. Prewriting → Brainstorming

A **personal narrative** is a true story about an event or experience of the writer. Most personal narratives are told in the first person because the author is writing about himself or herself or a group that includes him or her.

First Person Pronouns

I, we, me, us, mine, our, ours

Write a personal narrative about an event or experience from your life or choose from the writing prompts on page 20. Refer to the Writing Process on pages 1 and 2 for information about writing a personal narrative. For an example of writing a personal narrative, see pages 3-11.

Brainstorm ideas for a topic for your personal narrative. Then circle the topic you have chosen.

What will the topic be for my personal narrative?

Write the topic you chose on the blank line below. Brainstorm ideas you have about your topic and write them below your topic.

1. Prewriting → Planning

Planning is the process of organizing thoughts and ideas for writing.

Use the graphic organizer below to make a plan for writing your personal narrative.

Title _____

Beginning/Introduction → **What? Who? When? Where? Why?**

What happened? _____

Who did what? _____

When did it take place? _____

Where did it take place? _____

Why did it happen? _____

Middle

End/Conclusion

3. Revising Checklist

Authors revise the text to make their writing better.

Read the first draft of your personal narrative. Ask yourself the following questions and circle your answers. Use the information you gather from these questions to revise your writing. Write changes on your first draft using arrows (Λ) to show where to add words or sentences. Draw a line through words or sentences you've decided to remove.

sheets of white construction paper
The windows looked like four ~~white rectangles~~.
Λ

1. Does my title make the reader want to read my writing? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

2. Does my first sentence capture the reader's interest? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

3. Is my writing organized with a beginning, a middle, and an end? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

4. Does it make sense? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

5. Do I need to add more details? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

6. Do I need to remove or add any words or sentences? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

7. Does the writing have my voice, the voice I use when I talk to my family and friends? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

8. Do I have my story separated into paragraphs? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

9. Did I write dialogue in its own paragraph? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

Ask a friend or a family member to read your personal narrative and answer the following questions. Write the answers below the questions.

1. Is there anything you'd like to know more about?

Notes: _____

2. Is there anything you don't understand?

Notes: _____

4. Editing Checklist

Reread and edit the revised draft of your personal narrative. Look carefully for mistakes in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, and sentence structure.

Spelling

Check for spelling errors. Use a dictionary to help correct spelling errors.

Circle words that are misspelled and write the correct spelling above.

Capitalization

Check to make sure you've capitalized:

- The first word of each sentence
- The word I
- Names of people and pets
- Words like mom, dad, mother, father, aunt, uncle when they are used as names
- Titles when they are used with names
- The first word of a quotation
- Proper nouns—nouns that name a specific person, place, or thing
- Days of week and months of the year

Underline any letters that need to be capitalized.

Punctuation

Check your punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks.

Use an arrow (∧) with the correct punctuation mark above to show where it needs to be inserted.

Word Usage

Read your writing aloud to see if you've used words correctly.

Put a line through words used incorrectly and write the correction above.

Sentence Structure

Check to make sure all of your sentences are complete thoughts. If all of your sentences are simple sentences, try to make some compound or complex.

Put lines through words you do not want to use. Use arrows (∧) to show where words should be added.

Personal Narrative Writing Prompts

1. Think about a favorite holiday memory. Write about what happened.
2. Write a true story about a fun or interesting experience.
3. Write a story about an experience you'll never forget.
4. Think about a trip you took, it could be far away or nearby. Write about what happened.
5. Write about a time when you felt embarrassed.
6. Think about a time when you felt scared. Write about what happened.
7. Think of a time when you had fun with a friend. Write about what happened.
8. Write about a time someone said you did a great job.
9. Write about one of your saddest memories.
10. Think about a time you had fun visiting a relative. Write about what happened.
11. Write a true story about an experience you've had with an animal.
12. Think about a time when you helped someone or someone helped you. Write about what happened.
13. Write about a time you felt happy.
14. Write about a time you felt proud of yourself.
15. Write about a hobby or activity you enjoy.

Personal Narrative Writing Rubric			
Organization	Voice and Word Choice	Language Arts Standards	Sentence Structure
<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% A real situation is established with a narrator and/or characters and a setting. The first sentence captures the reader's interest. Events unfold naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. A strong conclusion that follows from the narrated experience is provided.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% The writer's voice creates interest and enjoyment for the reader. The experience is portrayed using dialogue and descriptions that develop experiences and events to show the response of characters to situations. The writer's personality and feelings are expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% Writing shows a strong command of grade level language arts standards. The writer uses correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling for the most part.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% Sentences are varied: simple, compound, and complex. Sentences are well-developed and are interesting to the reader.</p>
<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% A real situation is established with a narrator and/or characters and a setting. The first sentence may capture the reader's interest. Events unfold naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. A conclusion that follows from the narrated experience is provided.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% The writer's voice creates some interest and enjoyment for the reader. The experience is portrayed using some dialogue and descriptions that develop experiences and events to show the response of characters to situations. Some of the writer's personality and feelings are expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% Writing shows a good command of grade level language arts standards. The few errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling do not interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% Sentences are varied for the most part. Sentences are complete and contain details that are interesting to the reader.</p>
<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% A real situation is established with a narrator and/or characters and a setting. Writing is somewhat organized, but lacks a complete sequence of events that unfolds naturally. A conclusion is provided.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% The writer's voice is usually evident. Writing needs more details. Writing shows some feeling. The writer's personality and feelings are vaguely expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% Writing shows some command of grade level language arts standards. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling may interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% Sentences are simple with few details. Some sentences are weak or awkward.</p>
<p>Score 1 → Below 70% A real situation with characters and a setting may be presented. Writing shows little or no evidence of organization. No conclusion or a weak conclusion is provided.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% The writer's voice is weak. Few details are provided to interest the reader. The writing is flat. The reader is not engaged.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% Writing shows little or no command of grade level language arts standards. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% Sentences are often incomplete or confusing.</p>