

UNIT 14

Lesson: *Narrative Paragraphs*

14.1 Introduction

Narrative paragraphs simply tell a story or convey a sequence of events. Generally, the events are told in chronological order; that is, the order in which they happened. However, a narrative paragraph most often tells a story in order to illustrate or demonstrate a point. Because of this, starting with a strong topic sentence is important. Teachers would consider the following topic sentence weak for a narrative paragraph:

Jeff's family went on a fishing trip to Horning's Hideout.

The above sentence lacks appeal and leaves the reader thinking, "So what!" As a topic sentence, it fails to establish any purpose for the paragraph.

Narrative paragraphs tell a story or relay a sequence of events.

14.2 Purpose and Appeal

Sometimes narrative writing simply entertains the reader. Academic writing, however, seeks to inform or persuade. To accomplish this, the **topic sentence** establishes a contention that you will set out to prove. This contention adds appeal as well. The following topic sentence stands in contrast to the one above:

Fishing at Horning's Hideout proved to be an enjoyable outing for Jeff and his family.

The above sentence makes an assertion to be proven and piques the reader's interest. Yes, the paragraph will tell the story of the family's fishing trip, but it will do so in a way which proves the trip to have been enjoyable. Furthermore, establishing a contention improves appeal by challenging the reader to respond to what is said. Finally, a topic sentence with a strong contention narrows the perspective or angle taken on the subject. Each point will have purpose and the story will not wander. Now comes development of supporting information.

The topic sentence of a narrative paragraph does not start the narration. It establishes a purpose.

14.3 Developing a narrative paragraph

All of the enjoyable parts of the family fishing trip will be the topic of this narrative paragraph. Hence, the writer brainstorms supporting information with a clear goal in mind and develops an extensive list of enjoyable parts for everyone. Most likely, all of these will not be used, but any points which might support the contention must be considered. Illustration 14A below lists as many pleasant aspects of the trip as the writer can recall.

14A - Brainstorming Supporting Information

Contention:	<i>Trip was enjoyable</i>
All:	<i>Excited preparations for the trip - Food, games, books, toys, fishing equipment Great place to fish Fun being in the woods Great weather</i>
Jeff and brother:	<i>Purchased bait there Catching the fish was fun Caught seven fish Interesting to see white peacocks Time with Father</i>
Father:	<i>Family time, tasty dinner</i>
Mother:	<i>Did needlework, read book, had quiet time</i>

Following the brainstorming of supporting information, arrange the ideas into a planning outline, such as in Illustration 14B. Naturally, points should flow in chronological order.

14B - Planning Outline

Topic sentence - *The family enjoyed their fishing trip to Horning's Hideout.*

1. *Whole prepared early in the morning*
 - a. *Mother packed*
 - (1) *Food for family*
 - (2) *Her book and needlework*
 - b. *Father checked car*
 - (1) *Made sure it was ready for the trip*
 - c. *Boys readied fishing poles*
 - (1) *Gathered toys and books for the long drive*
2. *Purchased bait upon reaching destination*
3. *Walked path along pond looking for a fishing spot*
 - a. *Carried gear*
 - b. *Jeff and his brother chose to fish from a shady spot*
 - (1) *Looked ideal*
 - (2) *Overhead branches snagged lines*
 - (3) *Undaunted, boys decided to move to other side of pond*
4. *Real fishing began*
 - a. *Older brother caught first fish*
 - b. *Next, Jeff caught a fish*
 - c. *Father became very busy*
 - (1) *Helping boys cast*
 - (2) *Helping keep hooks baited*
 - (3) *Helping reel in catch*

Events in narrative paragraphs should be arranged chronologically.

14B - Planning Outline (continued)

- d. *Mother enjoyed reading and doing needlework*
- e. *Caught seven fish over several hours*
- f. *Father taught boys how to clean fish before leaving*
- 5. *Great fun for whole family*
 - a. *Jeff and brother were excited to catch fish*
 - b. *Father enjoyed time with sons and day in woods*
 - c. *Mother enjoyed quiet time*
 - d. *Everyone delighted with the fish dinner*

Concluding sentence - *Family hopes for a return trip soon.*

14C - Sample Paragraph***Fishing Fun***

Fishing at Horning's Hideout proved to be an enjoyable outing for Jeff and his family. All family members rose early in the morning excited to prepare for the trip. Mother packed food for the family as well as her books and needlework. Father checked the car to make certain it was ready for the drive. Then with Father's help, Jeff and his brother readied their fishing poles along with the books and toys which would entertain them on the hour's drive. When the family arrived at their destination, they stopped by the office to purchase some worms to use as bait. Cheerfully walking along the narrow path, the family transported their gear all the way around the small pond looking for just the right place to cast their lines. In hopes that fish would be lurking in the shadows, Jeff and his brother decided to fish from a shady area along one side of the pond. Though it seemed like the perfect fishing spot, overhead branches interfered with casting. Undaunted after snagging lines several times, the avid fishermen decided it would be best to move to the other side of the pond. Here, the fish began to bite. Before long, Jeff's older brother caught the first fish. Jeff caught one soon after. Suddenly, Father became very active, helping the two excited boys keep their hooks baited and reel in catch after catch. Just before noon, Jeff hooked what turned out to be the largest trout of the day, which he hung in the water near the shore with the other captured fish. While Father and the boys fished, Mother enjoyed sitting at the picnic table and reading quietly or doing her needlework. After several hours of fishing, and a total catch of seven fish, Father showed the boys how to clean the fish before packing up for the trip home. The outing was great fun for the whole family. Jeff and his brother found much excitement in catching the fish. Father enjoyed helping the boys and spending a day in the woods. Mother expressed her pleasure in being with her family and seeing everyone having an agreeable time. Most of all, everyone's taste buds were delighted with the dinner that evening. Because the day was such fun, the family is hoping for a return trip soon.

Direct Discourse:
The exact words
spoken are
quoted.

Indirect Discourse:
The words spoken
are paraphrased.

Metaphor:
Compares two
items without
the use of
“like” or “as.”

14.4 Using dialogue in the narrative

Since students tend to include dialogue in narrative paragraphs, you should understand the two ways to present such discourse. The first method is **direct discourse**, or dialogue, which is a quote of the exact words spoken by someone. These words, when written exactly as spoken, are to be presented in quotation marks and attributed to the speaker. The second method of presenting dialogue is **indirect discourse** by which the words are paraphrased and not written in quotation marks. This is the method to use in assignments for this course when recounting personal experience. This limitation, however, does not apply when presenting research material.

The samples of direct and indirect discourse below illustrate how to change from one form to the other.

Direct Discourse (Dialogue)

“I had a delightful time with my family and so appreciated everyone getting along with one another,” said Mother on the way home.

Jason suggested, “Let’s move to the other side of the pond.”

Indirect Discourse

Mother expressed her pleasure in being with her family and seeing everyone having an agreeable time.

Jason calmly suggested fishing from the other side of the pond.

14.5 Literary Device - Metaphor

Figurative language, as mentioned in Unit 8, explains one concept or item with another in order to clarify the first. The **metaphor** is one such literary device. Like a simile, a metaphor compares two items; but instead of saying one thing is “like” another, it treats the one as if it is the other. For example:

Flowing water sliced through the dike.

The farmer touched the hot fence to see if the juice was flowing.

Note that metaphorical wording does not include “like” or “as.” The writer of the above sentences does not spell out that water is acting like a knife, or that an electrified fence feels like it is hot, or that voltage is as juice. Instead, the reader must connect each pair of concepts.

Metaphors occur frequently and can be found in a variety of parts of speech. Study the following chart to become familiar with some of the many uses of metaphors.

verbs:	<i>The game <u>heated up</u> as the quarterback <u>rifled</u> the pass to the receiver who <u>knifed</u> between two defenders and “<u>tightroped</u>” down the sideline.</i> <i>After much negotiation, the salesman <u>shaved</u> ten percent off the price of the car.</i>
adjectives and adverbs:	<i>Life is a <u>carnival</u> ride.</i> <i>The <u>ferocious</u> housecat attacked its prey.</i> <i>The quarterback threw the football to the <u>flying</u> receiver.</i>
prepositional phrases:	<i>He had muscles (of <u>steel</u>.)</i> <i>She was saddened (by her <u>ash heap</u>) of dreams.</i>
nouns:	<i>The <u>army</u> of seals swam in <u>ranks</u>.</i> <i>Her decorative <u>touch</u> was evident in the home.</i>
appositives:	<i>On the bed sat the dog, a <u>whining baby</u>.</i>

UNIT 14

Narrative Paragraphs

Daily Assignments

Exercise 1

A. Reading Assignment:

Study the Unit 14 Lesson on narrative paragraphs thoroughly.

B. Lesson Exercise:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. What must be established in order to make a narrative paragraph interesting?
2. What are the two methods for presenting dialogue?
3. What is a metaphor?

C. Writing Exercise:

1. *Brainstorm a narrative paragraph on a topic approved by your instructor. Write your brainstorming list neatly, in a manner that is suitable for submission with your final draft.*

Purpose: inform

Audience: peers

Topic suggestions: a family outing, a family crisis

2. *Do research, if required, for supporting information. Gather bibliographic information, general notes on the topic, and prepare quotations, summaries, or paraphrases to offer in support of your position as described in the Unit 10 Lesson.*
3. *Write a topic sentence and create a planning outline for this narrative paragraph. The planning outline will also be submitted to your instructor with your final draft.*

Exercise 2

A. Grammar Drill:

Review the prepositions.

B. Style Drill:

Identify the style point used in the following sentence.

While Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry both participated in Virginia colonial politics, the men differed greatly.

C. Writing Exercise:

Draft the entire narrative paragraph which you planned in Exercise 1. Insert proper citations for any research evidence included. This unit's literary device, a metaphor, is to be included in the paragraph

and may be added any time between now and Exercise 4. If you find, at this point, that your planning outline must be changed, revise it and create a new copy for submission.

Complete a copy of your paragraph draft today so that you can mark corrections on it tomorrow. This draft, with corrections, will be submitted to your instructor with your final draft in Exercise 5.

Exercise 3

A. Grammar Drill:

Drill the prepositions again.

B. Formality Drill:

Using the formality and grammar rules explained in Unit 2, rewrite the sentence below in proper form:

Jefferson didn't like making speeches or participating in oral dispute.

C. Writing Exercise:

- 1. Now begin to edit your paragraph draft from Exercise 2, marking corrections and changes on your rough draft. Consult the paragraph checklist to insure that you are following set guidelines.*
- 2. Add three different style points.*
- 3. Create another copy of this revision for submission in Exercise 5.*

Exercise 4

A. Grammar Drill:

Drill the prepositions. Now write the list in order from memory and submit it to your instructor for correction.

B. Style Drill:

Identify the style point used in the following sentence.

In contrast, Patrick Henry's reputation as an outstanding orator still stands today.

C. Writing Exercise:

- 1. Go over your paragraph and correct all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.*
- 2. This unit's literary device must be added to the paragraph by now. If you cannot fit the device into the assignment, write two sample sentences, each including this week's literary device, and submit them with your paragraph.*
- 3. Make other improvements in words and phrases that may come to mind.*
- 4. Prepare a revised draft of your paragraph.*

Exercise 5

A. Grammar Drill:

Drill prepositions again.

B. Formality Drill:

Using the formality and grammar rules explained in Unit 2, rewrite the sentence below in proper form:

Since both Jefferson and Henry opposed George III and the British Parliament.

C. Writing Exercise:

1. *The final opportunity to polish your paragraph has come. Read the paragraph aloud slowly and listen for problem areas. Now, have someone else read it to you so that you can listen and be certain that the product is well-written.*
2. *Using the Paragraph Checklist, review your paragraph. Check off each guideline in the upper section when you have verified that you have followed it. In the lower section, mark the style points you have used. On your final draft, identify these style points by writing the corresponding number from the checklist directly above each one, and label the literary device.*
3. *Make certain that the text includes appropriate parenthetical citations in-text, and that the "Works Cited" page is complete.*
4. *Make certain that the assignment is formatted properly, including heading.*
5. *Submit your work to the instructor:*
 - a. *Final draft paragraph*
 - b. *"Works Cited" page, if applicable*
 - c. *Literary device, if created separately*
 - d. *Paragraph checklist*
 - e. *All drafts*
 - f. *Topic sentence & planning outline*
 - g. *Brainstorming*