Personal Narrative

When responding to a prompt asking you to write a personal narrative, use what you have learned from this collection's Writing Workshop, the rubric on page 134, and the steps below.

Writing Prompt

Write a narrative in which you relate a significant personal experience. Use sensory details and vivid verbs to describe the experience, and tell readers why the experience is still meaningful to you.

Study the Prompt

Be sure to read the prompt carefully, and identify all parts of your task. Circle or underline key instructional words: *personal, narrative, details, significant,* and *experience*. Reread the prompt to make sure you understand your task.

Note that your narrative should not only describe the events of this experience but also the meaning the experience had for you.

Tip: Spend about five minutes studying the prompt.

Plan Your Response

First, think of some personal experiences that you feel comfortable writing about. Choose the most meaningful of those experiences as the subject of your narrative. Once you have settled on your subject, take notes on the following:

- specific details that you remember about the experience
- what the experience reveals about you or someone else
- why the experience is still important to you

Tip: Spend about fifteen minutes planning your response.

Respond to the Prompt

Using the notes you've just made, draft your narrative. Follow these guidelines:

- In the introduction, grab the reader's attention with an interesting opener, and set the scene with sensory details.
- In the body of your narrative, relate the events of your experience in a clear order, usually chronological.
- In the conclusion, state why the experience is meaningful to you.
- Remember to use a consistent first-person point of view.

Tip: Spend about twenty minutes writing your draft.

Improve Your Response

Revising Go back to the key aspects of the prompt. Have you used sensory details and vivid verbs? Have you used transitions to guide the reader?

Proofreading Take a few minutes to proofread your personal narrative to correct errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Make sure that all of your edits are neat, and erase any stray marks.

Checking Your Final Copy Before you turn in your personal narrative, read it one more time to catch any errors that you may have missed. You'll be glad that you took the extra time for one final review.

Tip: Save ten minutes to improve your paper.

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Review the meaning of the word *significant.* Ask volunteers to describe life events that are significant, and why they are significant. Then form small student groups and have students tell personal stories about experiences they consider significant. Provide students with dictionaries so they may look up words they are not entirely sure how to use.

Writers Gaining Proficiency

If students have trouble identifying the significance of an event, ask them to meet with a partner. Have students briefly retell the events they are considering writing about. Their partners should ask questions such as the following: "Why is the event important?" "Did your life change much after the event?" "How?" The listening student can take notes, or students can talk into a tape recorder.

Standards Focus

Objectives

Students will

- write narratives about a significant personal experience
- use sensory details and vivid verbs
- revise writing to improve organization

Direct Teach

Guided Practice

Study the Prompt

Before students begin writing, encourage them to answer the following questions:

1. What is my time limit?
2. What are the key skills assessed in the scoring rubric?
3. Who is my audience?
4. What is my purpose?

Plan Your Response

Point out to students that the scoring rubric emphasizes the importance of using effective organization and transitions. Remind students to include transitional words that indicate time order, such as *first, then, next, soon, later,* and *finally.*

Improve Your Response

Remind students that the scoring rubric emphasizes taking a creative approach to writing a narrative. Encourage students to use descriptive language and vivid verbs to depict their events in an interesting and creative way.

Assess

Use the rubric on p. 134 to assess students' essays.