

## The Narrative Essay: Relating Personal Experience (or Event or Observation) to a Social Issue

- Due dates:      Peer Review      October 3<sup>rd</sup>  
                         Final Draft      October 10<sup>th</sup>
- Length: 500 words minimum; 1,000,000 words maximum
- Basic components (paragraphs)
  - ✓ Introduction—where you establish the *rhetorical situation*. You are writing this to recount a story or narrate an event (personal experience) to pass along an informed perspective or stance on an issue to a reader.
  - ✓ Thesis/Central Claim—akin to Carolina’s “My experience prompts me to demonstrate why a wall on the US-Mexico border would do no good” or Marissa’s “My culture, my people, and my family are not punchlines. Let’s put a halt to cultural appropriation.”
  - ✓ Body—what happened? In as much detail as possible describe the event as it unfolded. The better you paint a picture with your words, the more your reader will relate.

What issue are you reminded of? REMEMBER: this does NOT need to be some earth-shaking, ground-rattling issue.

Details, details, details—by giving your readers vivid mental sensations of the sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes of your *Event*, your Narrative Essay will have a greater impact.

- ✓ Closing—usually an issue has differing sides to it. My stance on the issue “Trophy Hunting” certainly isn’t universally agreed upon. In closing you should reiterate your stance on this issue and appeal to your readers to understand the issue in the same way you do.

\*Email addressed to me with the Subject Line “My Narrative Essay’s Event,” and one sentence that explains what your event will be in your Literacy Narrative.

Por ejemplo, “In my Narrative Essay, I plan to write about the time I had a rattlesnake on my back patio.”

When I respond to your email, I’m going to ask you a question. I bet you already know what my question will be. If you’ve not yet guessed, I’m going to ask, “What *issue* are you going to associate with your event?”

## HB5 Prep Course Writing

Michael Duncan, Associate Professor English

### Topic Sentence Exercise

Topic sentences allow our audience to preview the main idea of a paragraph. Think of topic sentences as a mini-thesis for that particular paragraph. It helps forecast what topic will be discussed in that paragraph and how that topic will be handled. This helps the reader understand the point of the paragraph in context with the overall essay.

#### Directions

The following three paragraphs are lacking topic sentences. Read the paragraph and then in the blank provided create a topic sentence that unifies the paragraph and makes it clear what the main point of the paragraph is for the reader.

Paragraph without topic sentence:

1. Spotify is the biggest streaming service for music available right now. Another prominent streaming service that comes with Apple products, including I-phones, is Apple music. While these are the two biggest music streaming services, there are others out there, including Tidal, YouTube music, and Amazon music.

Topic Sentence:

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2. As my mom drove away from the front of the school I felt my anxiety increase. When I walked through the front door the sounds of the students laughing, talking, and rushing around made me nervous. My backpack suddenly felt very heavy as I tried to find my way to my new locker.

Topic Sentence:

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3. You will need a heavy jacket and some snow boots. Another useful item would be a GPS tracker, just in case you should stray from trail and get lost. A walking stick will also help you in the deeper parts of the trail. Be sure to bring plenty of water, although there is snow all around you you cannot eat it without lowering your body temperature.

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## HB5 Prep Course Reading

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### Group Annotating Assignment

Now that we have read Chapter 2 “Annotating Texts and Developing Vocabulary” from our textbook *Common Places*, let’s practice annotating an article.

- Review Chapter 2: Annotating Texts and Developing vocabulary
- Print, Read, and actively annotate the article “Long Live the Mammoth” by Beth Shapiro from *Popular Science* magazine
- <https://www.popsoci.com/de-extinction-long-live-mammoth/>
- Watch “Mr. DNA” scene from Jurassic Park <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h58IRIVHhGc>

This article is an example of a Non-fiction expository essay. Because the article’s audience is not the general public, it contains lots of technical language that we might not be familiar with.

- Try and make at least ONE annotation per paragraph from the article.
- Remember to write both on the text itself and in the margin.
- These annotations could be critical annotations or explanatory annotations.

Remember that these are notes from YOU to YOU concerning words or phrases you might not be familiar with, the main idea of paragraphs, the thesis of the article, and major supporting ideas. Review your notes from the chapter regarding annotations.

- When you are finished form groups of two to three
- Take turns sharing some of your annotations with your group.
- Show them the marks made on the text and explain why you made that particular annotation

By sharing and articulating our annotations we can understand our own reading process and also develop new annotating strategies from our groups.