



Genre Study Routines for Narrative Text

The following procedures are recommended for narrative genre study.

Immersion/Planting the Seed (weeks one and two):

1. Teacher introduces the idea of narrative text structure.
2. Teacher finds, sorts, and reads short touchstone narratives and examines their structures with the class.
3. Students create a list of seed ideas in their writing notebooks, such as journeys, special events, and memories triggered by personal or family artifacts, or complete a memory wheel (a circle with at least four quadrants labeled with “a happy time,” “a sad time,” “an angry time,” “a frightened time,” “a first time,” or “a last time”) by including an illustration and associated caption in each quadrant.
4. Teacher introduces genre focus—the personal narrative.
5. Students read exemplary personal narratives from student-relevant materials such as *My Apron: A Story from My Childhood* (Eric Carle), *Letting Swift River Go* (Jane Yolen), *Always My Dad* (Sharon Wyeth), *Tree of Cranes* (Allen Say), *The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros), and *When I Was Your Age: Original Stories About Growing Up* (Amy Ehrlich).
6. Class creates chart listing key elements of a personal narrative (see **SPACE**).

Planning/Growing the Seed (weeks three and four):

1. Students identify a seed idea which would permit them to draft a personal narrative like those examined.
2. Students conduct partner interviews to identify potential readers’ interest and questions about the selected idea—record notes in writing notebook.
3. Students make double-column entries in the writing notebook to record characters, settings, and events on one side and thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue associated with each on the other side.
4. Students record responses to key questions in writing notebook:
 - a. How does this affect me now and do I really care about it?
 - b. What is something important about me that my reader will learn?
 - c. What are the interesting beginning, middle, and end parts of my story?
 - d. What is my conflict or “hot spot” and how do I plan to make it dramatic?

5. Teacher introduces key phrases for narrative writing (e.g., the next day, later that night, eventually, after a while, never before).
6. Teacher introduces, examines, and demonstrates how to use various leads for a personal narrative (e.g., flashback, snapshot, dialogue exchange, and internal monologue).
7. Students plan the paper using a planning sheet such as a timeline, flowchart, story board, or some other graphic organizer.

Drafting/Growing the Seed (week five):

1. Students continue to plan using the planning sheet.
2. Students flash-draft (quickly write) each part of the paper (i.e., the beginning, middle, and end) separately to avoid over-investment in the draft and a reluctance to revise (but expectations for a best first draft should be communicated).

Revising/Pruning & Grafting (weeks six and seven):

1. Teacher models and helps students identify and cut irrelevant information.
2. Teacher models and helps students add additional details to “thin” parts (using carets or numbered notes).
3. Teacher models and helps students zoom in on the story’s “hot spot” and flesh it out.
4. Students revise a minimum of three times, first independently, then with a peer, and then with the teacher.

Editing/Pruning & Grafting (week eight):

1. Teacher models and then students use an editing checklist.
2. Students edit a minimum of two times, first independently and then with a peer.
3. Students check spelling by reading the text aloud backwards.

Publishing & Celebration/Garden Show (week nine):

1. Students decide on a format for the narrative, such as a picture book or class anthology.