



NARRATIVE  
WRITING  
WORKSHOP

# WHY DO WE TELL STORIES?

TELL THESE STORIES...









# WHAT IS A NARRATIVE?

- A narrative essay is a personal story with a purpose.
- It is often written in first person (“I”).
- Narratives give you an opportunity to share an experience from your own life when you gained insight or learned something.
- Narrative essays are fun to read because your message, or purpose, is conveyed through storytelling.
- You can write about a simple, small moment or a dramatic episode; the important thing is that it means something to you.



# THREE NARRATIVE OPTIONS

1. Tell a true story from your own experience, but write it as if it were a fiction piece, in third person or first person.
2. Create a completely fictional story, but tell it in first person, which would give it the same feel as a personal narrative.
3. Tell a true story that happened to someone else, but write it in first person, as if you are that person. For example, I could write about my mother's experience of getting lost as a child, but I might write it in her voice.



# THREE MAIN COMPONENTS

- The three main components of a good narrative essay are:
  - **Plot**
    - A narrative essay is, first and foremost, a story.
    - Like any good story, it has characters, action, and a story arc.
  - **Description**
    - Allowing your readers to experience the story through sensory detail, rather than just telling them about it, is key to effective storytelling.
  - **Purpose**
    - Just like any other type of essay, a narrative essay has a purpose.
    - It may not be obviously stated, and your essay may not necessarily include a thesis statement, but your reader will come away with new understanding.





# BRAINSTORMING





DECIDE WHICH OF THE THREE OPTIONS YOU  
WILL CHOOSE:

OPTION 1:  
Personal  
Story

OPTION 2:  
Made-up  
Story

OPTION 3:  
Someone  
Else's Story

MAKE A LIST OF 5 STORIES YOU COULD TELL.

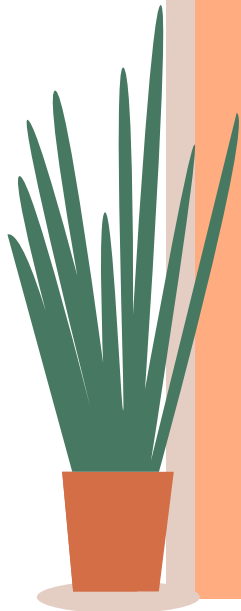
## PERSONAL STORY

Imagine a future in which we each have a personalized robot servant.

Pick a family member and write about his or her reputation in your family, or tell a family legend.

Write about your own best or worst family vacation memory.

What traditions does your family have? Pick one and write about it.

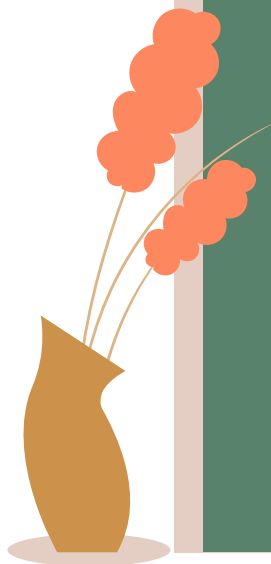


## MADE-UP STORY

What road-trip would you take if you suddenly could? Write about it.

Imagine that we lost all electricity, water, and gas for a month without any time to prepare.

Tell this story: "Well, I thought it was going to be a regular summer doing all our regular things..."



# GROUP BRAINSTORMING

Steps:

1. Share your list with your group.
2. Ask questions and give each other feedback.
3. What sounds most interesting?
4. What was the most fun for you to talk about?
5. By the end of your discussion, circle your top two options.



# FREWRITE

Think about your top two ideas. When the time starts, continue writing and don't stop until the end of the time period. If you run out of ideas, just write down whatever pops into your head or refer back to the three you eliminated. It doesn't have to make sense, and don't worry about punctuation, spelling, or grammar.

Re-read your first free write. Circle/highlight the most interesting idea.



# PICKING YOUR STORY

01.

What was easiest to write about?

02.

Can I tell this story using sensory detail?

03.

Can I tell this story in 1 ½-2 pages?

04.

Is this topic appropriate for my audience?

