

Lesson 4 Personal Narrative

Have you ever written a true story about yourself and what you did? You were writing a personal narrative. A **personal narrative** is a true story an author writes about his or her own experiences.

Tanner wrote a personal narrative about going to work with his mom.

Shadowing Mom

School was cancelled today because the furnace broke. Mom didn't want me home by myself, so she took me to work with her. She is the Activities Director at a senior housing center. It's a place where older people live. Mom says they aren't sick, but they just couldn't keep up the homes they used to live in.

I figured I would just sit in her office and read. Mom had other ideas. Right after we got there, she announced that I would be the caller for the Thursday morning Bingo game. I knew better than to complain, but inside I was screaming. I'm way too old to play Bingo!

There were about 15 people in the dining room waiting to play. They were all talking and laughing. Mom introduced me and helped me get the game started. They all paid attention, even though there was still some talking and laughing going on. They got me to talk and laugh, too. They were teasing me about being too young to play Bingo. Now, that's a laugh!

Spending the day with those people made me realize that people with gray hair aren't just old people. They are funny, full of life, and still interested in the world. They made me feel very welcome. I wouldn't mind going to work with Mom again some day.

Here are the features of a personal narrative:

- It tells a story about something that happens in a writer's life.
- It is written in the first person, using words such as *I*, *me*, *mine*, and *my*.
- It uses time and time-order words to tell events in a sequence.
- It expresses the writer's personal feelings.

Notice that Tanner also wrote a conclusion. A conclusion is a series of sentences or a paragraph that wraps up the story. Every story should have a good conclusion. In Tanner's narrative, he concludes by telling what he learned from his day at work with his mom. Underline Tanner's conclusion.

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Why do people write personal narratives?

They might want to share their thoughts and feelings. They might want to entertain their readers. Often, people write to share their experiences *and* to entertain.

Who reads personal narratives?

If you write a personal narrative, teachers, parents, and classmates might read it. As you think about your audience, ask yourself what you want to share with your readers. What might they learn about you?

What can personal narratives be about?

They can be about anything that actually happens to the author. It might be a happy or sad event, a silly situation or a frightening one.

So, what could you write a personal narrative about? Here are some idea-starters. Look them over.

the earliest holiday I remember
my first sports practice
my greatest accomplishment
the thing that makes me angry

my first day of school
the best family trip
my most embarrassing moment
my biggest challenge

What memories popped into your head as you read these idea-starters? Jot some notes about each memory. One of these could be the start of a great personal narrative!

Idea-starter: _____

Idea-starter: _____

Idea-starter: _____

Idea-starter: _____

Idea-starter: _____

Idea-starter: _____