

Lesson 6 The Writing Process: Personal Narrative

Personal narratives can be about ordinary things. They don't have to be about the time you crash-landed an airplane, saved the lives of 17 people, and led everyone over a mountain to safety. If we had to wait for that to happen, almost no one would have anything to write about.

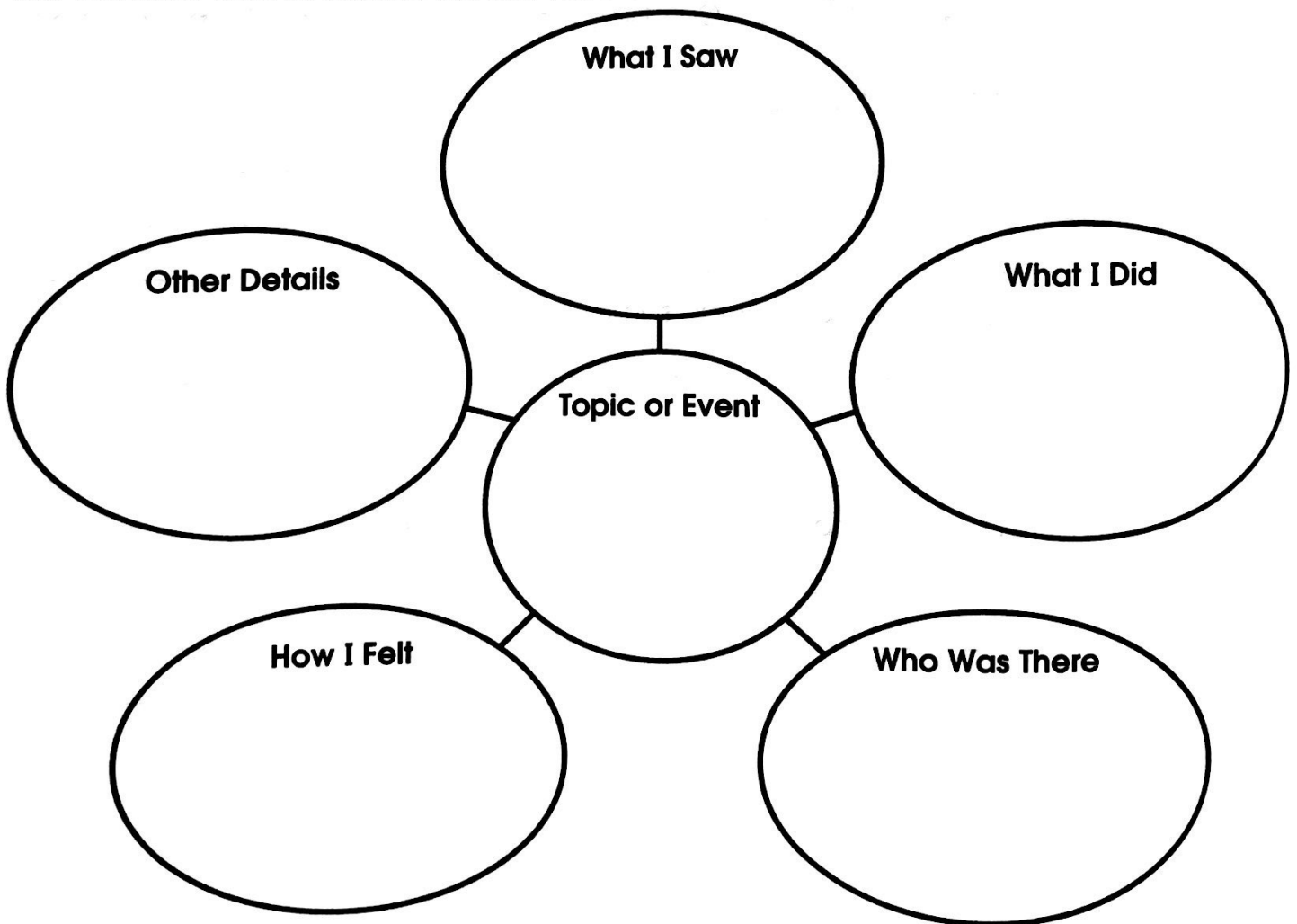
Remember the narrative you read on page 28? Tanner wrote about going to work with his mom. Nothing dangerous or exciting happened. It was just another day, and he learned something along the way. Follow the writing process to develop a personal narrative about one of your own regular days. Maybe you'll learn something along the way.

Prewrite

Look at the idea-starters on page 29 and the notes you made. Choose one of those ideas or another idea that you like, and begin to explore it here.

My idea: _____

Use this idea web to record details. Write down as many as you can.



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So far, you have chosen a topic and recorded ideas. Now, it is time to put your ideas in order. Think about the story you are about to tell in your personal narrative. Use the sequence chart on this page to list the events in order. Do not worry about details yet.

A sequence chart consisting of ten horizontal rectangular boxes arranged vertically, connected by downward-pointing arrows. Each box is intended for a student to write an event in chronological order.

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Revise

It is hard even for experienced writers to change their work. But every good writer does it. Writers must look closely at a first draft and make sure that it is as good as it can be.

Answer the questions below about your draft. If you answer "no" to any questions, those are the areas that might need improvement. Make notes on your draft about changes you might make later. Ask a friend to read your draft and answer the questions, too.

- Did you tell about just one "thing" in your narrative?
- Did you include details to make readers feel as if they are right there with you?
- Did you tell events in order? Did you use time words to show when events happened?
- Did you tell how you felt about the events? Do readers get a sense of your personal feelings?
- Did you use active verbs?
- Does your story flow well when you read it out loud?
- Does your story have a good conclusion?

Now, focus on making sure you connected with your audience. Did you remember to ask yourself questions such as: Who will read this personal narrative? What might they be interested in? What do they know about me? What might they learn about me from this narrative?

When Tanner wrote his personal narrative about going to work with his mom, he was not sure how to finish it. Finally, he decided his audience would be interested in how he felt about the day. Here is Tanner's final paragraph from page 28.

Spending the day with those people made me realize that ~~those~~ people ^{with gray hair} aren't just old people. They are funny and 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.





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Proofread

Now, correct those last little mistakes. Proofreading is easier if you look for just one kind of error at a time. So, read through once for capital letters. Read again for end punctuation. Read a third time for spelling errors. Here is a checklist to help you proofread your revised narrative. Ask a friend to proofread your writing, too.

- ___ Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- ___ Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
- ___ Each sentence states a complete thought.
- ___ All words are spelled correctly. (If you're not sure, check a dictionary.)

When proofreaders work, they use certain symbols. Using these symbols makes their job easier. These symbols will make your job easier, too.

-  Three little lines under a letter mean that the letter should be capitalized.
- If there is a period missing, do this .
- Can you insert a question mark like this? .
- Don't ever forget your exclamation points!
- Fix misspelled words like .

Use these symbols as you proofread your personal narrative. Remember to read your writing out loud, even if there is no one to listen. Sometimes, you hear mistakes you do not see.

Publish

Write a final copy of your personal narrative on a separate sheet of paper or make final changes to your computer document. Write or type carefully so there are no mistakes. When your narrative is finished, share it with readers who will enjoy it.