

# Narrative essay

A narrative essay is a piece of creative writing that tells the reader about an interesting event or a story. A narrative essay is always well planned and organised and it always includes an introduction, body and conclusion, which follow the events of the story. The opening paragraph must get the reader's attention straightaway. The body of the essay needs to develop the story so that the reader stays interested. The conclusion can sum up the story or it can include an interesting twist.

A narrative essay includes the following features:

- It is usually written in the past tense.
- It can be about factual events or it can be fiction.
- It has a physical setting as well as a setting of time.
- It has a storyline of events.
- There are characters in the story.

Look at the following grammar and writing structures that are used in a narrative essay.

Simple sentences set the scene.	<b>The gift of giving</b>	The title should reflect the topic of the essay.
Simple past tense verbs describe the action.	It was a beautiful day in Durban. The weather was perfect to eat lunch outside. My friend, Leah, <b>headed</b> towards a boerewors roll stall and we <b>ordered</b> two tasty boerewors rolls to eat in the park.	introductory paragraph
A compound sentence joined by the conjunction <i>and</i> helps to make the text flow.	We watched as the vendor made up our boerewors rolls and added lots of tomato sauce. He handed us the rolls <b>and</b> Leah took out her money to pay.	supporting paragraph
Description tells us more about the character.	The man, whose <b>face was wrinkled from so much time in the sun</b> , surprised us. "One of them is a bit cool," he said, "so never mind paying me. That one will be my freebie of the day."	Dialogue in the form of direct speech makes the story more interesting.
Adverb of place tells the reader more about the setting.	We said thanks and went to sit down on a park bench and eat our food. The rolls were delicious but as we ate I was distracted by a man sitting <b>nearby</b> . When we were finished we went to the rubbish bin to throw away our serviettes. Suddenly I heard a <b>strong</b> voice ask, "Excuse me, is there anything left?"	supporting paragraph
A compound sentence joined by the conjunction <i>but</i> helps to make the text flow.	I turned around and saw that it was the man who had been sitting nearby. I was embarrassed and I didn't know what to say except, "No, I ate it already." I felt bad <b>but</b> I didn't know what I could do. That's when Leah said, "I'll be right back," and ran off. I wondered where she was going.	The adjective gives more detail to the story.
Adverb of manner tells the reader more about the action.	I watched <b>curiously</b> as Leah went to the boerewors roll stand. I watched her chatting to the vendor and then she bought a boerewors roll and came back to us. She gave the roll to the hungry man. As she did so Leah simply said, "I was just passing on the kindness that someone gave to me."	supporting paragraph
This is the message that the writer wants to share with the reader.	That day I learnt how generosity can go further than the person you give it to. By giving, you teach others how to give also.	concluding paragraph

# Descriptive essay

A descriptive essay is a piece of creative writing that describes a person, place or thing in a lot of detail so that the reader can easily imagine what is being written about. A descriptive essay is always well planned and organised and it always includes an introduction, body and conclusion. All the paragraphs in a descriptive essay need to link together well to help develop the description of the thing that is being written about.

A descriptive essay includes the following features:

- interesting and varied vocabulary, including strong verbs
- descriptive language that includes adjectives, adverbs and figurative language
- words and descriptions that appeal to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

Look at the following grammar and writing structures that are used in a descriptive essay.

**My private library**

My teacher handed out our new school textbooks at the start of the year. The heavy pile **tottered unevenly** on my desk and looked like it might **topple over** and **tumble down**. The bright and colourful covers were hidden between the creamy stack of pages. I ran my hands over the sharp edges and corners of my **textbook tower**.

Later I looked at each book carefully. The shiny covers were **like wrapping paper around a gift**. My fingers **crept** to the **fresh-cut** edges of each cover before I turned the perfectly **smooth** pages of each book.

Words and fonts and pictures and photographs leapt out from each book. The bold black print on every cream page invited me to stop and read but then I noticed **one slim book hiding** at the bottom of the pile. I picked it up eagerly and turned it over gently in my hands.

It was a poetry book and on each page short lines danced across the **off-white** background. I knew that this was going to be my favourite book.

I love the start of each school year because I can travel through the pages of all my new books. Sometimes the journey is difficult and I feel defeated but I know that I can always retrace my steps if I need to because for a whole year the books are my own private library.

An interesting verb describes the action.

Alliteration links to the verb *tottered*.

Alliteration is repeated in this metaphor.

A simile describes how the writer feels about the books.

Adjectives help the reader 'see' what the writer describes.

Personification introduces human qualities to the book so the readers can relate to it.

The writer uses an alternative adjective to *creamy* (used above) to avoid repetition.

This is the message that the writer wants to get across.

An adverb of manner describes the action in more detail.

introductory paragraph

An interesting verb describes the action.

supporting paragraph

supporting paragraph

supporting paragraph

concluding paragraph