

# Narrative Writing Guide

Step 1: choose a question  
Step 2: plan



## Planning for 'narrative'

- ✓ Zoom out: describe the weather and setting. Think about how you are crafting the mood. Introduce your character. This is your *exposition*.
- ✓ Zoom in and focus on the rising action: what are the events that lead to your *climax*.
- ✓ Introduction of *conflict*: what is the problem that your character must encounter?
- ✓ Climax – how will you create tension in the build up to your climax? This is your *rising action*.
- ✓ *Falling action* – how are you moving towards the *resolution*?
- ✓ Zoom out - how does your story end? Surprise? Clear resolution? Cliffhanger? New problem?

Ambitious vocabulary – my examples



## What to include...

### Sentence types

- Simile start
- Preposition start
- Triplet
- Short
- Subordinate clause start
- Adverb start
- 'ing' start
- 'ed' start

### Engaging openings

- In the middle of action
- Dialogue
- Anaphora
- Slow reveal
- Tension / suspense
- Set the scene: weather / setting
- Atmospheric hook
- Direct address
- Hint at what is going to happen

### Engaging endings

- Short sentence
- One line paragraph
- Weather
- Circular structure - return to mood at the beginning or change?

### Structural methods to include

- Motifs
- One line paragraphs
- Short sentences for effect
- Anaphora
- Parallelism
- Lists
- Flashback (narrative)
- Cliff hanger (narrative)

### Links and transitions

- Repeating words and ideas between paragraphs - these act as a thread.
- Repeating short sentences

### Imagery to include

- Pathetic fallacy
- Symbolism
- Sensory imagery
- Metaphors
- Similes
- Personification
- Colour imagery
- Interesting verbs / adjectives / adverbs
- Contrast
- Juxtaposition
- Oxymoron
- Paradox
- Alliteration / sound devices

# MODEL PLAN

Write a story that ends with the line 'How did I get here?'

Top tip: decide on your climax and work backwards!



TIPS

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition	<p>Setting: The protagonist wakes in an unfamiliar place—quiet, cold, eerie.</p> <p>Characters: The main character is confused and isolated.</p> <p>Hook: The ground was cold beneath me. Where was I?</p>	<p>Pathetic fallacy: Use the weather to mirror the character's confusion (fog, cold, dark).</p> <p>- Sensory imagery: Describe the surroundings using touch and sound (the rough ground, distant rustling).</p> <p>- Metaphor: The sky was a blanket of grey suffocation.</p>	<p>Repetition: Repeat the confusion: Where am I?</p> <p>Introduce a motif of fog to symbolise the unknown and carry through the story.</p>
2. Rising Action	<p>Conflict: The protagonist explores, encountering strange details (symbols, sounds).</p> <p>Tension: They feel increasing panic as memories flash but make no sense.</p>	<p>- Personification: The trees seemed to whisper, their branches clawing at the sky.</p> <p>- Alliteration: Faint footsteps filled the silence.</p>	<p>Motif: Continue the use of shadows or fog to create a sense of growing confusion. Description link: Build on the eerie environment with each step.</p>
3. Climax	<p>Turning point: The protagonist finds a clue or realisation that changes their understanding.</p>	<p>- Anaphora: This is not real. This cannot be real.</p> <p>- Paradox: The more I understand, the less sense it makes.</p>	<p>Transition: Use 'suddenly' or 'then' to indicate the revelation.</p> <p>Repetition: Repeat a key phrase (This isn't real)</p>
4. Falling Action	<p>Consequences: They try to escape, but their confusion grows.</p> <p>Smaller conflicts: Memories flicker, but nothing adds up.</p>	<p>- One line paragraph: Nothing made sense anymore.</p>	<p>Motif: Reintroduce the shadows/fog, now more intense.</p>
5. Resolution	<p>Ending: The protagonist, still trapped, asks How did I get here?</p>	<p>- Simile: The realisation hit me like a wave crashing over a sinking ship.</p> <p>- Sensory imagery and short sentences: The air felt thick, like it was pressing in on me from all sides. My breaths were shallow. The shadows moved. I couldn't tell if they were real or not. How did I get here?</p>	<p>Repetition: Echo the original question from the start—How did I get here?—for a cyclical effect.</p>

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story with the title: The Unexpected Journey.

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story about a time when a simple mistake changed everything.

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.

Write a story that starts with the line: 'I had never been so sure of anything in my life, until now.'

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.

Write a story that ends with the line: 'I knew from that moment, nothing would ever be the same.'

This is your plan. Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story that includes the line: 'It was too late to turn back now.'

This is your plan. Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story where a character must make a difficult decision between loyalty and honesty.

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
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5. Resolution			



1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story with the title: The Secret of the Old House.

This is your plan. Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.

Write a story that starts with the line: 'The storm raged outside, but inside, it was quiet... too quiet.'

This is your plan. Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story about someone who wakes up one day and discovers they have no memory of the past week.

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			

1. Brainstorm ideas in each box
2. Add a list of descriptive techniques
3. Include key vocabulary
4. Add in transitions
5. Think about any motifs that you can use across each section.



Write a story that ends with the line: 'I walked away, knowing I'd never look back.'

This is your plan.  
Add any notes that will help you when you write up your narrative.

Story Element	Details (Planning Notes)	Techniques	Transition/Linking
1. Introduction/Exposition			
2. Rising Action			
3. Climax			
4. Falling Action			
5. Resolution			



# Tool kit

## Key Vocabulary

Approach 	Sashay	Luminous
Barge	Ramble	Majestic
Bounce	Saunter	Gargantuan
Catapult	Scamper	Weathered
Chase	Scurry	Unyielding
Clamber	Scuttle	Acrid
Climb	Shake	Pummelled
Cower	Skip	Seeped
Crawl	Slide	Ablaze
Dance	Slither	Bleak
Dart	Sparkle	Flamboyant
Dash	Soar	Flaming
Dive	Spin	Inexplicable
Drag	Sprint	Tumultuous
Flee	Stagger	Iridescent
Flounder	Stomp	Succumb
Fly	Stroll	Voracious
Frolic	Toss	Copious
Glide	Trample	Desolate
Hasten	Tread	Grotesque
Hike	Trek	Rush
Hop	Veer	
Hurry	Wade	<b>Colour imagery:</b>
Inch	Whirl	Sapphire
Jump	Whisk	Bronze
Leap	Writhe	Marigold
Limp	Pounce	Ash
March	Prance	Obsidian
Move	Prowl	Coal
Nod	Pursue	Azure
Pace	Malignant	Ruby
Parade	Merciless	Burgundy
Plod	Relentless	Charcoal
Plow	Stagnant	Crimson
Glared	Iridescent	Sepia

## Vary Your Punctuation

➤ Semicolons are used to separate two main clauses with linked ideas

The temple was bursting with life; the crowd's loud chatter was a warm welcome.

We use them to make clear the link between two main clauses. They can replace FANBOYS or a full stop or a comma splice.

➤ Colons are used to separate two main clauses where the 2nd clause explains the 1st

The roof of the pagoda was beautiful: it was covered in vibrant colours and ostentatious sculptures.

Or to introduce an item or series of items.

I got what I was waiting for: silence at last.

We use them for emphasis (a pause before the key detail has some impact)

➤ Dashes indicate a pause. Can be used in the same way as commas and brackets.

## Interesting Sentences

- Appositives: The child, face covered with chocolate, asked his mother for some milk.
- Subordinate clause: Due to the rain, he couldn't play football that day.
- Use an 'Ing clause' - Having found a hotel, we looked for somewhere to have dinner.
- Use a Simile - Like a surgeon before an operation, he washed his hands thoroughly.
- Use a Prepositional phrase (A prepositional phrase may help to indicate where something is, in relation to something else.) - At the end of the lane, stood an old house.
- Use an Adverb - Angrily, she threw her bag on the floor and stormed upstairs to her room.
- Use a Connective - Since it is raining outside, we'll stay in and watch a film.
- Use an 'Ed clause' - Painted in pink, the house was hard to miss!

## Words for weather

rain, cloud, rainbow, temperature, pressure, overcast, shower, sunrise, dry, sunset, humidity, cold, heat, wind, cloudy, fog, breeze, humid, lightning, blustery, thunder, snow, thunderstorm, downpour, drought, moisture, drizzle, warm, hail, icicle, climate, storm, flood, muggy, gale, atmosphere, mist, condensation, ice storm, gust, snowfall, whirlwind, hurricane, cyclone, balmy, avalanche, frost, blizzard, spring, smog.

