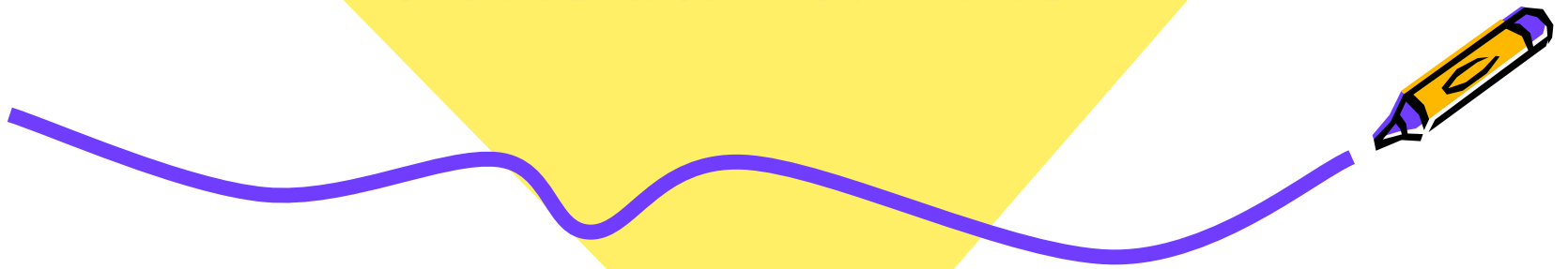




Personal/Narrative Writing

Notes and Activities

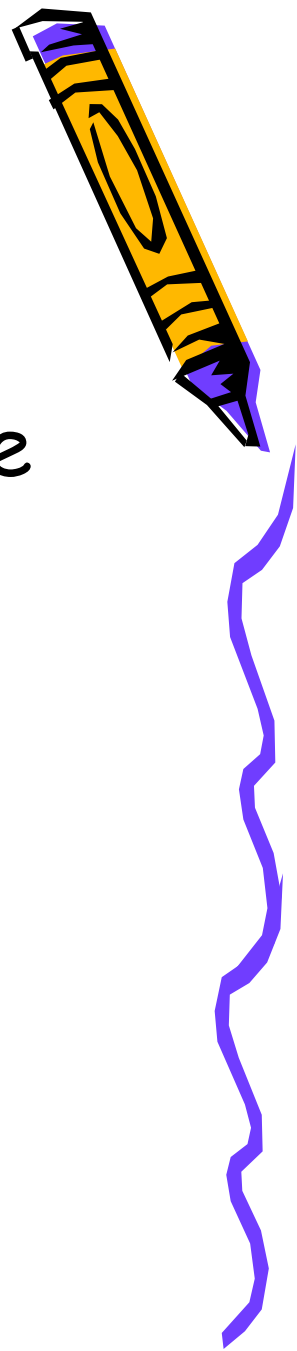


Narrative Writing

- The goal of narrative writing is to tell a story, or part of a story.
 - You might tell a story about the best celebration you ever had and why it was your favourite.
 - You might tell of a time you were nervous, about what happened and how you reacted.
 - You might write a fictional story about being an eye witness at a historical event.



Discussion Brainstorm: Characteristics of Good Stories



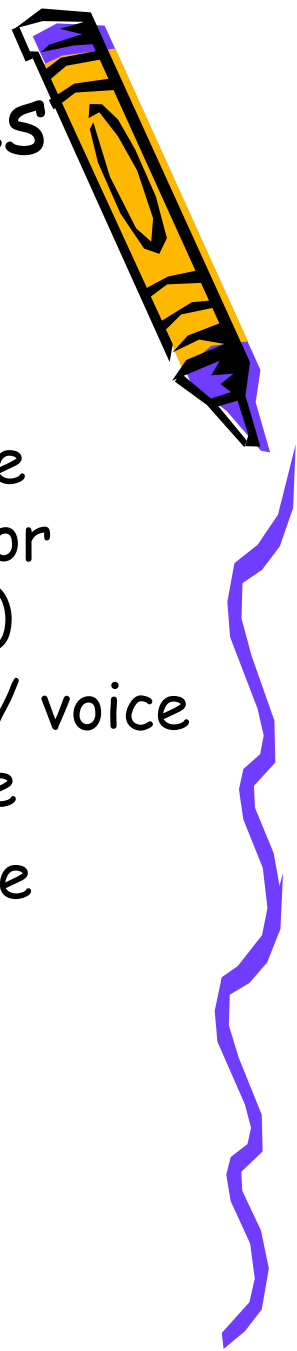
- Think about some of your favourite movies, books and stories.
- What makes these favourites so good?



Characteristics of Good Stories

Block A

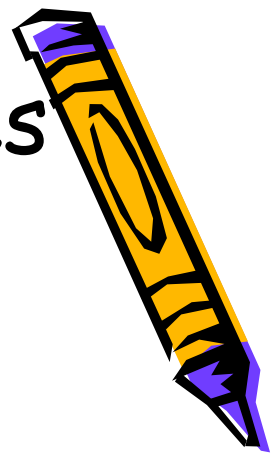
- Beginning, middle and end
- Conflict/problem
- Good hook (in the intro or beginning)
- Clint Eastwood (awesome, well-described, well-developed characters)
- Excitement/ exciting or interesting events (something needs to happen - action)
- Clear story line
- An underdog (some minor characters or ones who struggle)
- Good /interesting/ voice / realistic dialogue
- Surprise /suspense



Characteristics of Good Stories

Block B

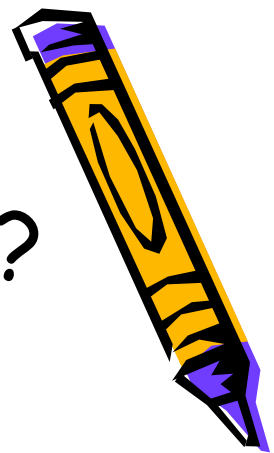
- Good imagery
- Sentence fluency
- An exciting climax
- Moral or message (theme)
- A story (back story)
- Makes you think or make connections/ relatable
- Good description of characters (well-developed) (antagonist/protagonist)
- Humour adds to it
- Suspense
- Just the right amount of details
- About interesting topics
- Resolution or ending
- Action (rising & falling)
- Chemistry
- Dialogue (realistic)



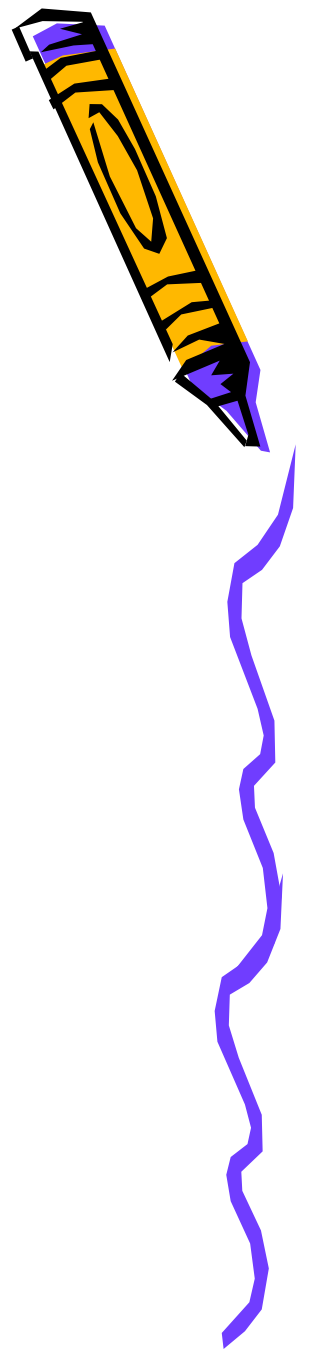
What makes for “good” stories?

This is what our class came up with:

- A clear idea or concept (imaginative, creative)
- Suspense
- Realistic dialogue (perhaps it's relatable or funny)
- Makes you think (theme?)
- Character development (relatable, truthful)
- Action (death, climax, intriguing, drama)
- Relates to emotions (readers have an emotional response)
- Makes sense (ideas are clearly organized/ beginning, middle and end)
- There are just the right amount of details



Characteristics of Narrative Writing:



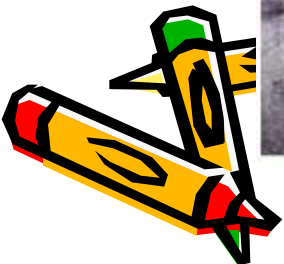
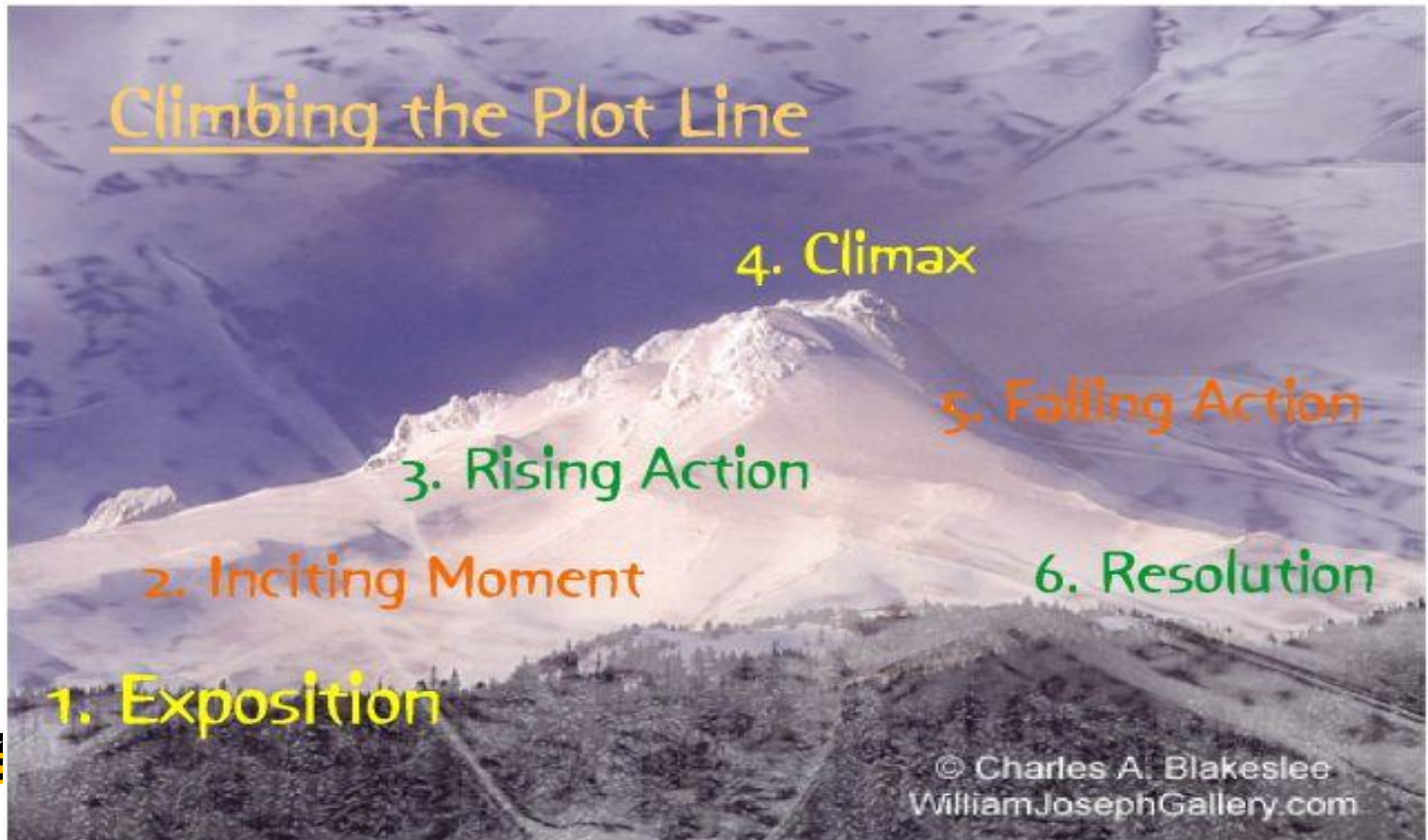
- Plot
- Conflict
- Characterization
- Setting
- Theme
- Point of View
- Sequencing/
Organization
- Transitions



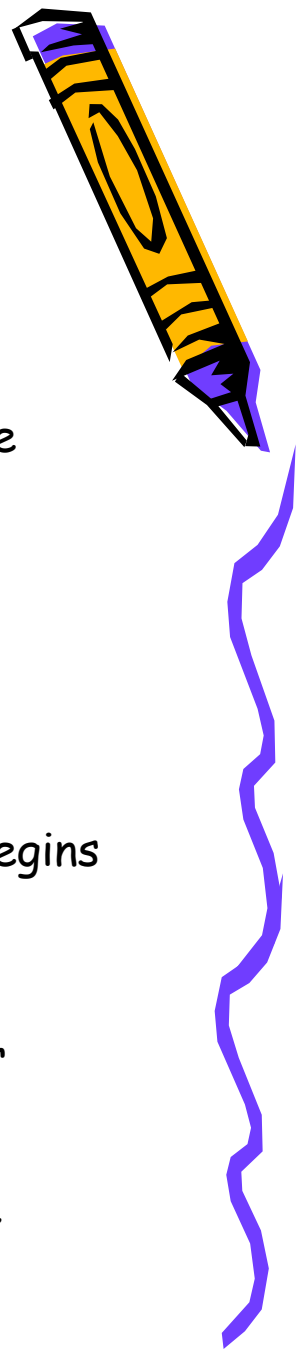


Short story - Plot

A typical plot or story line follows a beginning, middle and end structure with a sequence of events similar to this:



Basic Plot Structure:



- **Exposition/Inciting Moment/Lead**
An initial incident gets the action rolling
- **Rising Action**
The rising action introduces complications or obstacles to the protagonist (main character) creating conflict and suspense
- **Climax**
The rising action builds up to a climax which is the most suspenseful moment or the height of action
- **Falling Action**
The falling action follows the climax when the author tries begins to tie up loose ends
- **Resolution**
The resolution is the ending where the conflict is resolved or there is closure to the story

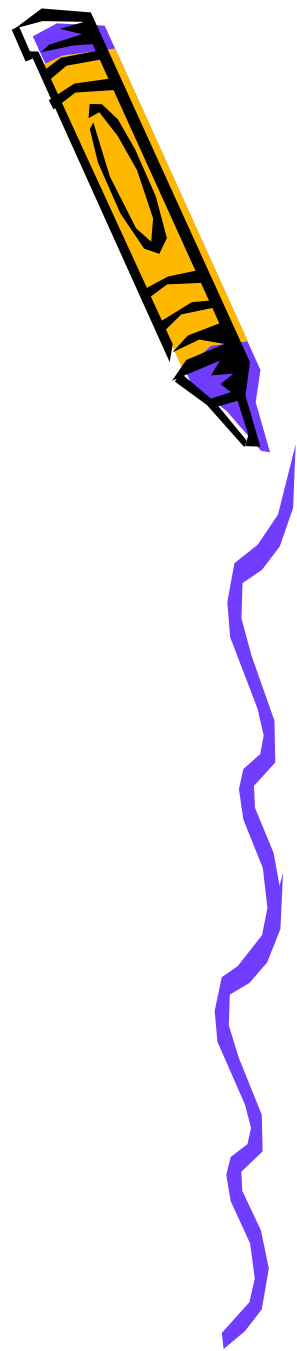


Not all stories have a resolution - some end at the climactic point - we call these cliffhangers!

Uses of Narrative Writing:

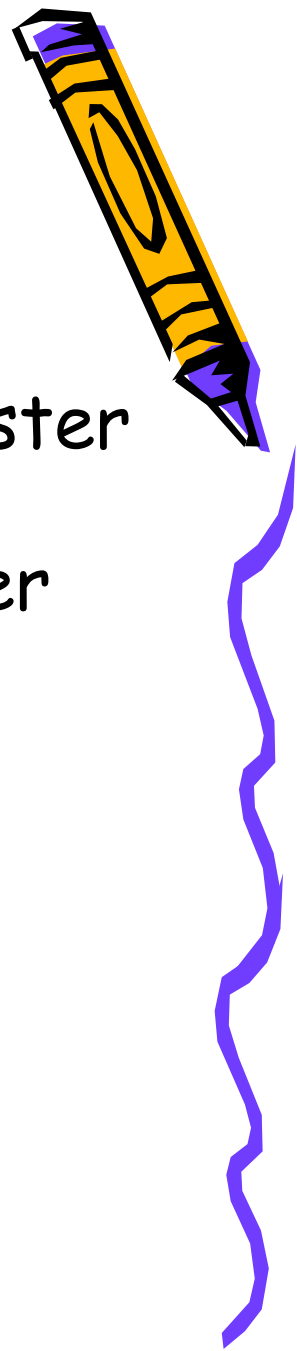
Narrative writing appears in, but is not limited to:

- Novels
- Short stories
- Biographies
- Historical accounts
- Essays
- Poems
- plays



Activity 1:

I've Created A Monster



- Create a visual of a character or a monster of your own design
- Draw and colour your character/monster
- Then, write a description of your character/monster that includes the following details:
 - Name
 - Favourite thing to eat
 - Favourite thing to do
 - Greatest fear
 - Favourite song (and explanation why)
 - Where he/she lives or where he/she is from
 - One unique descriptive quality



Sample Character/ Monster



Name: Homer J. Simpson

Favourite thing to eat: mmmm donuts,
and pork chops

Favourite things to do: bowling, fishing
and eating

Greatest fear: butterflies

Favourite song (& why): *It's Raining
Men*, because it's fun to dance to

Lives/is from: Springfield

Unique, descriptive quality: Homer
Simpson holds the Springfield
Nuclear Plant record for the Most
Years Worked at an Entry Level
Position.



Sample Character/ Monster



Name: James P. "Sully" Sullivan
Favourite thing to eat: peanut butter and bananas

Favourite things to do: be the number one scare monster

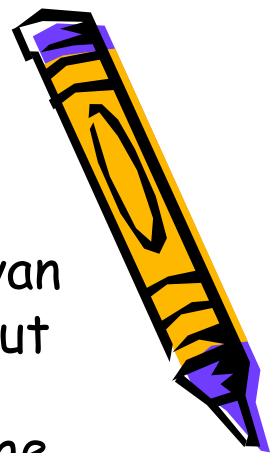
Greatest fear: children's tears

Favourite song (& why): *Monster Mash*, because it was written about him

Lives/is from: Monstropolis

Unique, descriptive quality:

Although he has big scary teeth and is a monstrous size, Sully is kindhearted and is the first one to lend a hand. He ends up changing his monstrous ways and finds out that children's laughter is more powerful than fear.



Sample Character/ Monster

Name: Stewart Gilligan "Stewie" Griffin

Favourite thing to eat: Graham Crackers

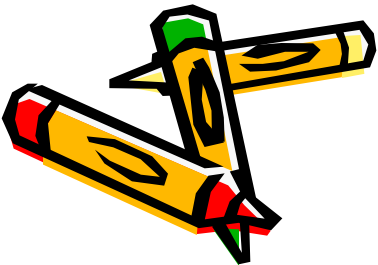
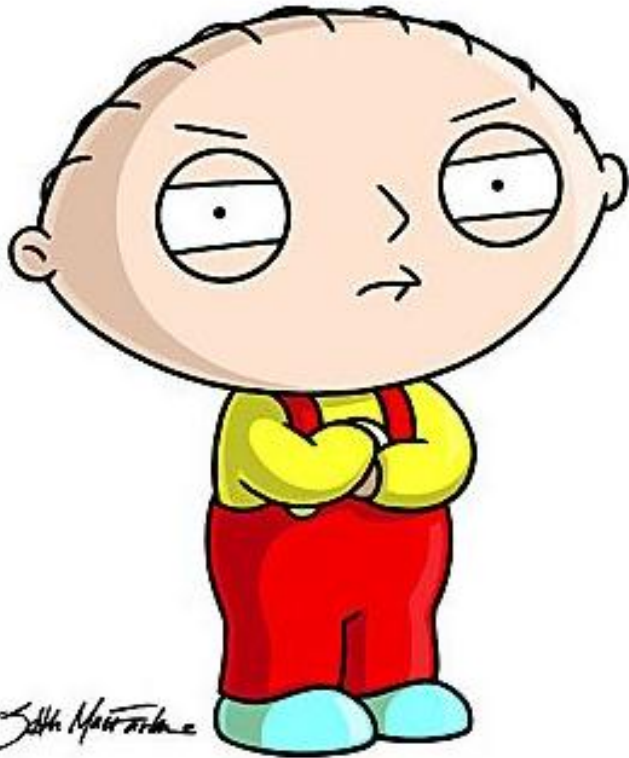
Favourite things to do: read literature, and plot world domination

Greatest fear: my evil twin Bertram

Favourite song (& why): *Rocket Man*, because it would be awesome to have one of those things

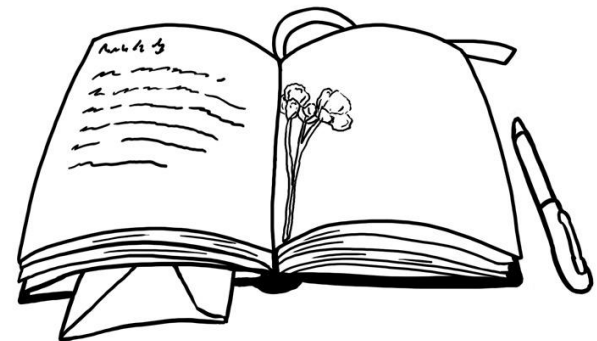
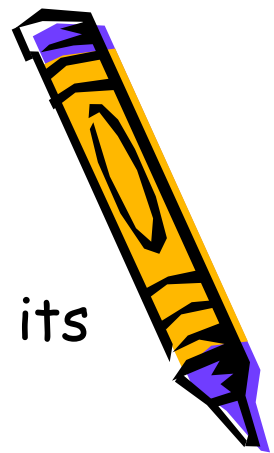
Lives/is from: Quohog, Rhode Island

Unique, descriptive quality: Stewie suffers from antisocial personality disorder, and acute paranoia.



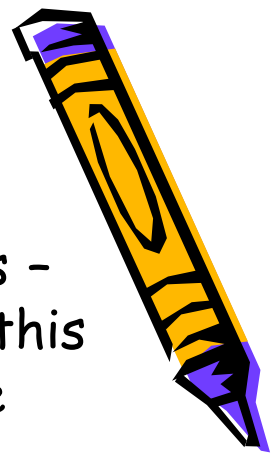
Activity 2: Monster Diary Entry

- Now that you have created a character, write from its perspective; tell part of its story.
- Write a diary entry of about 1 page in length, from your monster's perspective.
- You might choose to write about a traumatic event, or just a-day-in-the-life kind of material.
- Think about how to reveal some of your character's traits without stating them obviously or outright - think about "showing" the reader instead of just "telling".



Try to work through the writing process for your monster's diary entry:

- **Pre-writing:** Brainstorm/ sketch/ list some ideas - Are you going to write about a day in the life of this monster, or write about a particularly memorable moment in its life?
- **Drafting:** Write an entry, without stopping and worrying conventional errors. Get the information down on paper first.
- **Revising:** Go back and make it better. Choose better word choices, change the order or organization of your thoughts, combine or separate sentences, make the writing clear, etc.
- **Editing:** Now go and look for and correct conventional errors - spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, capitalization, etc.



Revising your monster's diary - making it better



- **Sentence fluency** - do the sentence fluency check, then change at least 2 sentences to add a variety to your writing (join sentences, separate sentences, change the structure or beginning, etc)
- **Word choice** - Find at least 5 dull or vague words (especially verbs) and change them to more precise, vibrant, descriptive words
- **Organization** - How is your entry organized? Does it open with a strong lead/intro? Are there sufficient details in the middle? How does it end? Does the order make sense? Make changes where necessary.
- **Voice** - Does this piece have a unique and enthusiastic voice? Have you written from the monster's perspective? Does it sound realistic? How does it sound when read aloud?



Editing your monster entry - making it correct:



- **Spelling** - circle words you feel may be spelled incorrectly, then check with a dictionary or friend
- **Punctuation** - Are all your sentences complete? Fix any fragments. Have you used the right punctuation marks?
- **Grammar** - Have you stuck with the same verb tense throughout? Have you used helping/linking verbs when necessary (*was walking, have seen*)? Are words used correctly?
- **Capitalization** - Are proper nouns capitalized? Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?
- **Entry format** - Is your entry displayed in paragraphs? Have you indented paragraphs?



Self-Assessment of your Monster Diary Entry



Category	Criteria	Mark (4)
Voice	Voice is unique and enthusiastic; writing is honest and knowledgeable; written from monster's perspective that suits the character description	
Word Choice	Word choice is vivid, precise and descriptive; the "just right" words have been carefully selected	
Sentence Fluency	A variety of sentence lengths, beginnings and structures have been used to create an overall flow to the writing	
Creativity (Ideas)	The piece is unique and creative; has been well thought-out and planned; had a clear idea; student's best work	
Conventions	The piece has been carefully edited to avoid errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage (3 or fewer errors)	
Organization	Piece reads like a story with a lead or introduction that grabs the reader's attention, details and support, and then a conclusion or ending	
Presentation	Piece is presented neatly, is well organized, can be easily read, and monster image and bio is complete and attached	

Give yourself a mark for each criteria
Total /28



Activity 3: Group Monster



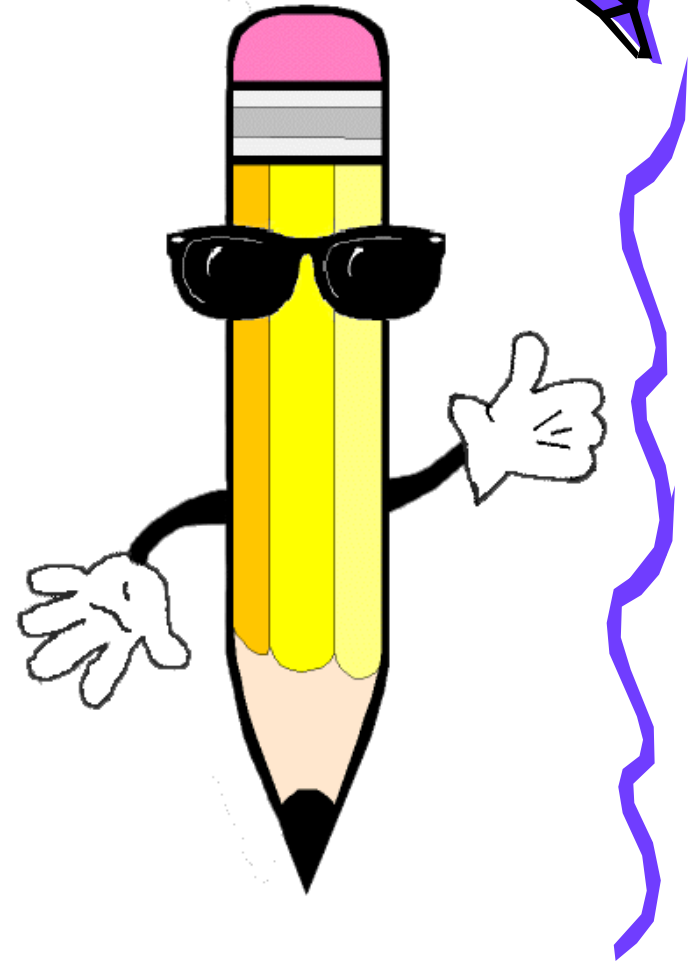
- Now that you each have your own monsters, you will be placed in groups of four to create a group monster.
- Your new monster must include a physical trait from each of the individual monsters.
- You then must create a new unique bio based on a collaborative effort of the new traits.
- Your group will then present your new creation to the class, with each member indicating which component of their original was contributed to the final character.
- This project makes description and descriptive writing enjoyable, and also fosters collaboration and negotiation skills within groups.

Make a poster with an image of your monster and all the bio info.



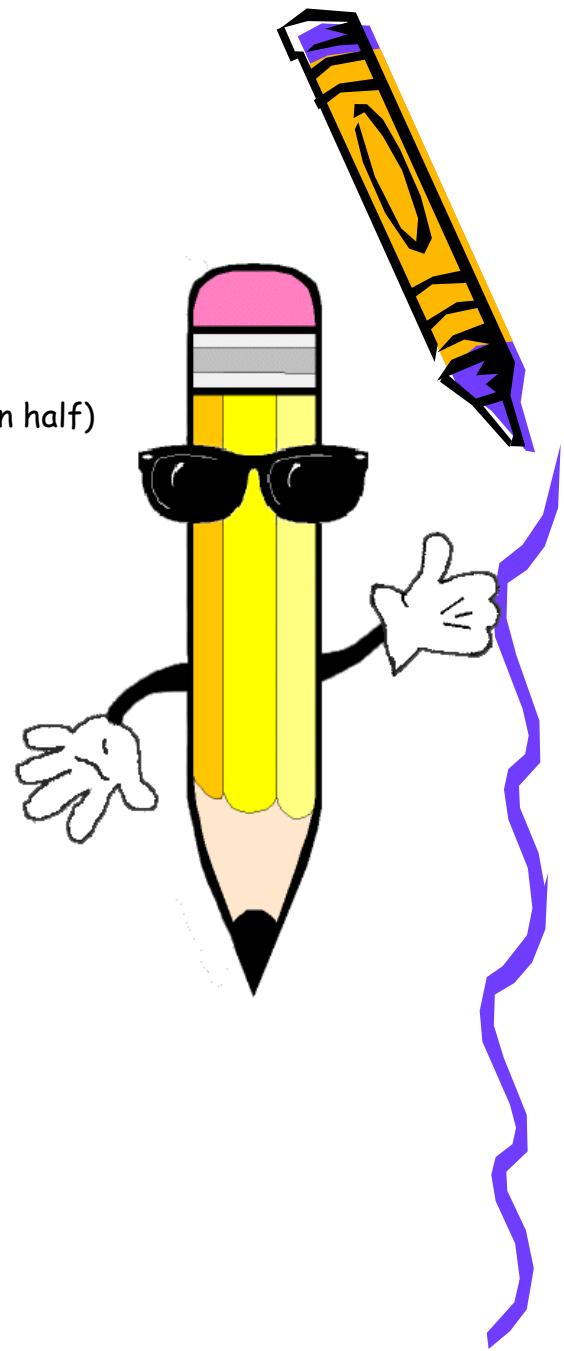
2nd Writing Activity - Inanimate Object Story

- Think about what it would be like if this pencil came to life.
 - How would it feel?
 - What would it say?
 - What would its day be like?
 - What would be some of its triumphs? Struggles?



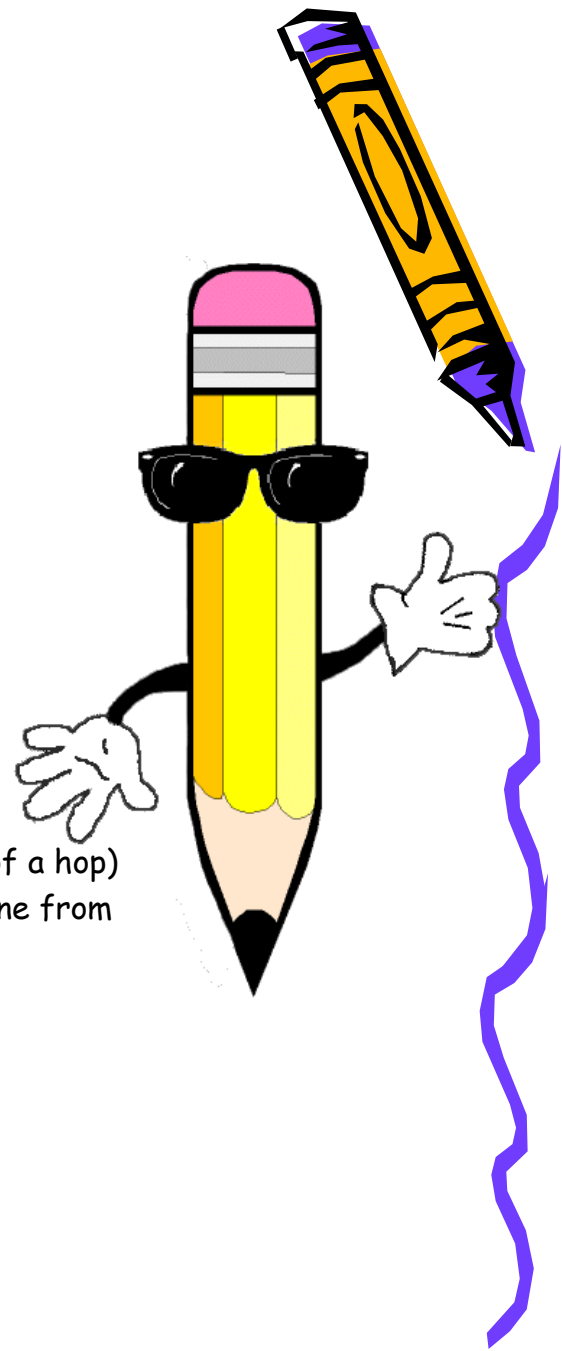
Pencil Brainstorm

- What if this pencil came to life?
 - How would it feel?
 - Used (good or bad way)
 - Abused (sharpening, chewed on, broken lead, dropped or snapped in half)
 - Bored
 - Small and scared
 - Important (rely on it - writing, doodling)
 - What would it say?
 - Have its own catch phrase - Oh Yeah!
 - Give me a break!
 - Use me!
 - What would its day be like?
 - Lose it and be adopted by other people
 - Sharpening is like a head message
 - Could get broken
 - Get thrown out
 - Hate exam time - exhausted!
 - What would be some of its triumphs? Struggles?
 - If it had a bad eraser, it wouldn't be able to fix mistakes
 - Getting sharpened



Pencil Brainstorm

- What if this pencil came to life?
 - How would it feel?
 - Sharpening is like starting fresh - at its best
 - Used (is controlled by people)
 - Has rivals in the pencil case
 - Lonely (at the bottom of a school bag/locker by itself)
 - Neglected (when owner uses computer instead)
 - Being bitten or chewed on
 - What would it say?
 - Wondering what's happening when it's not being used
 - What would its day be like?
 - Dances on the page (handwriting is flowy dance, if printing, more of a hop)
 - When you can't find a pencil, but it's in your bag, and you borrow one from someone else (you are stupid, neglected)
 - What would be some of its triumphs? Struggles?
 - Mechanical pencil - not enough lead left, but it makes it work
 - Help its owner in a quiz - feel pride
 - Wrote an awesome story together

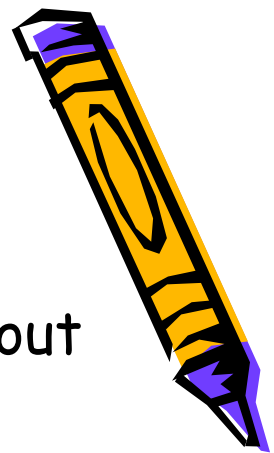


Bring Me To Life - Inanimate Object Story Pre-writing

- Choose an object to write about (pencil, football, shoe, fork, teddy bear, hockey puck, item of clothing...)
- Choose a method of pre-writing (sketching, brainstorming, listing, freewriting, etc) and begin mapping ideas for your story - this can all go in your writer's notebook.
- Consider:
 - how your object thinks and feels
 - its attitude
 - what things it might encounter in a day (its interactions with others, an adventure it might take, etc),
 - who it might befriend, and other details
 - its triumphs and struggles
- Begin writing/drafting your story
 - How will your story begin? Will you plunk the reader right into a moment of action, or will you include some sort of back story for the item? Remember, hooking your audience is key.
 - What problem will your object encounter? Try to include some action. Think about the different plot elements in a story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action & resolution)



Group Discussion



- In groups of 3, discuss the ideas that you have about your object.
- Have each member of your group give you at least 1 suggestion for your story.
- Record the suggestions your group members provide with your pre-writing.
- Make sure each person has a chance to share and give/receive feedback & suggestions.



What should my story include?

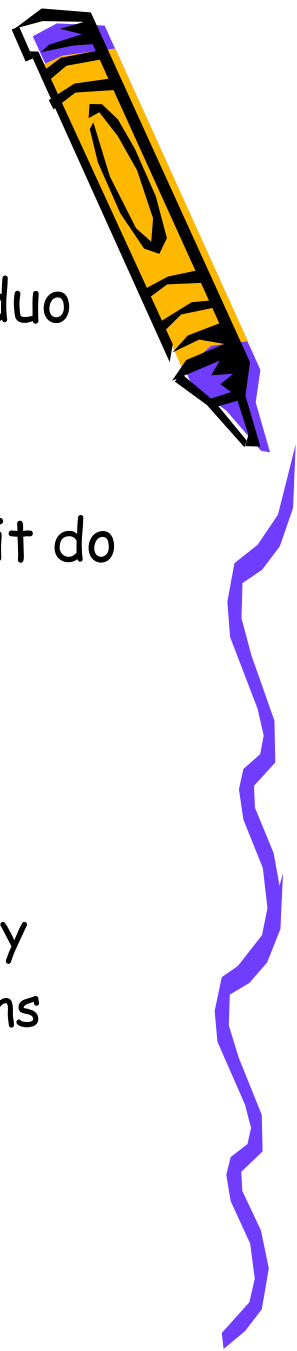


- Be written in first person (I, we...) - you are the object
- Have a beginning, middle and end, with plot elements
 - a brief setting
 - some development of character(s) - at least attitude/voice, and perhaps desires, or what drives it to act the way it does
 - a problem/conflict (something needs to happen in this brief story)
 - some sort of resolution (or at least knowing the story will continue)



Remember - you are only trying to capture a snapshot of this object's life - we won't have time to hear the whole story

Inanimate Object Story: Making It Better



- Read the sample “Bring Me To Life” story in your duo tang called *One Final Tremor*.
- Did you like the piece? Explain. What writing trait do you feel is the weakest in this piece? Why? How would you improve on it?
- In your journals, write a response that:
 - tells whether you liked or disliked the piece, and why
 - identifies the weakest trait in the piece, and explains why, or describes what is missing
 - fixes the weakness (rewrite a portion of the story)



The “snapshot” nature of personal narrative writing:



Personal narrative writing is writing that deals with telling stories about your life and experiences.

The “snapshot” nature of this type of writing is simply that - you cannot tell your entire life story (unless you are writing a memoir or autobiography), so you usually provide the reader of a “snapshot” - details about one specific event, day, or moment in your life.



3rd Writing Activity - Writing to a Photograph

- Find a photograph that you find intriguing and that ignites a writing spark. It can be a personal or family photograph, or one that you find in a book, magazine, or online source.
- Write a story about the photograph, or tell the story behind the photograph.
- To be strong, don't tell us you are writing about a photograph, but instead put us back in the moment it was taken. Fill in the details about what is occurring, who is involved, etc.



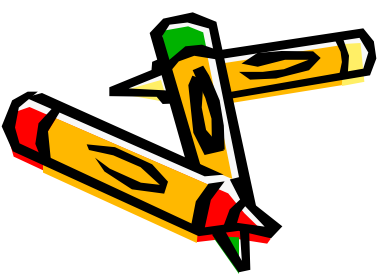
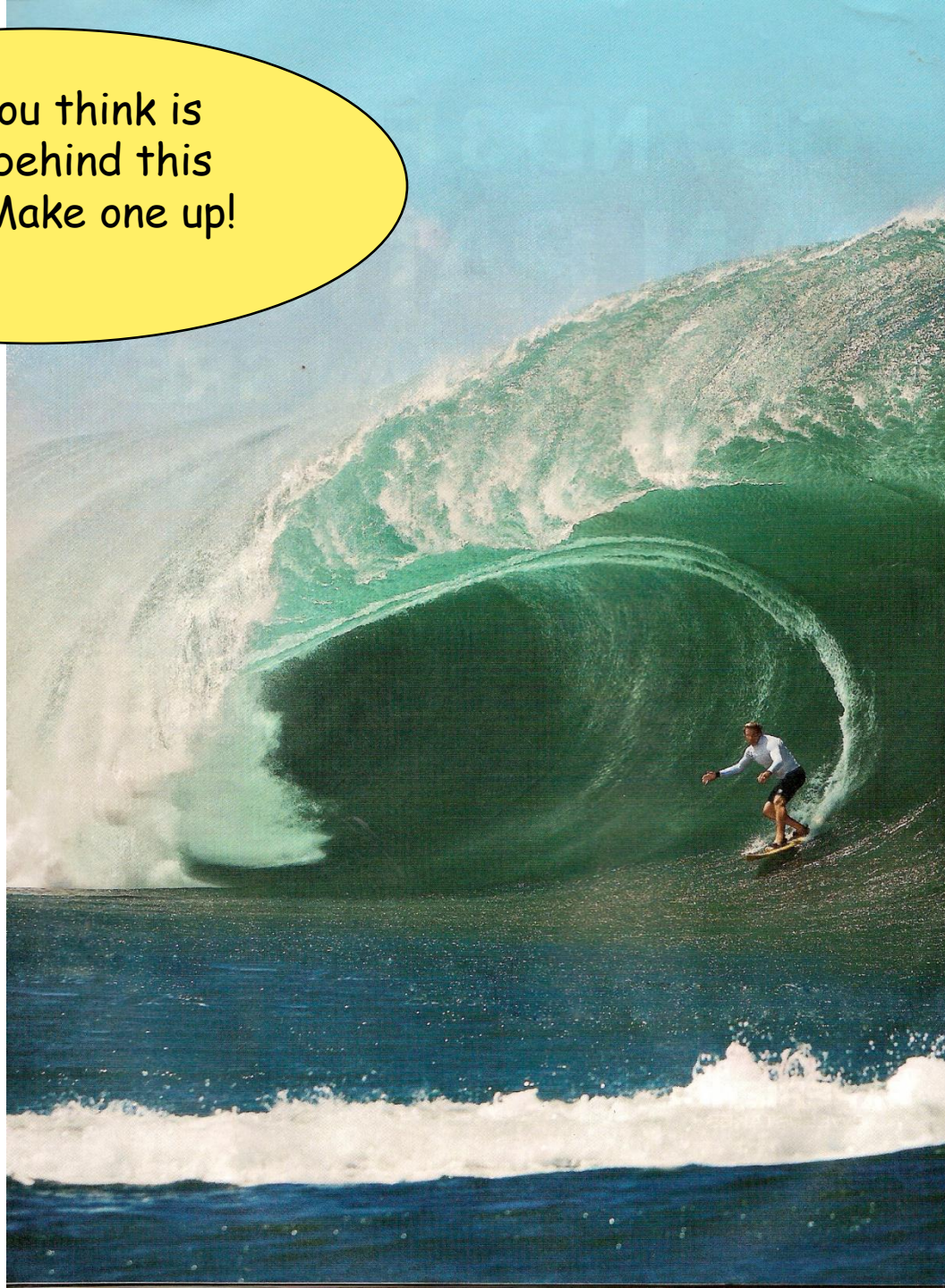
Activity 5: Snapshot Brainstorm



What do you think is the story behind this picture? Make one up!

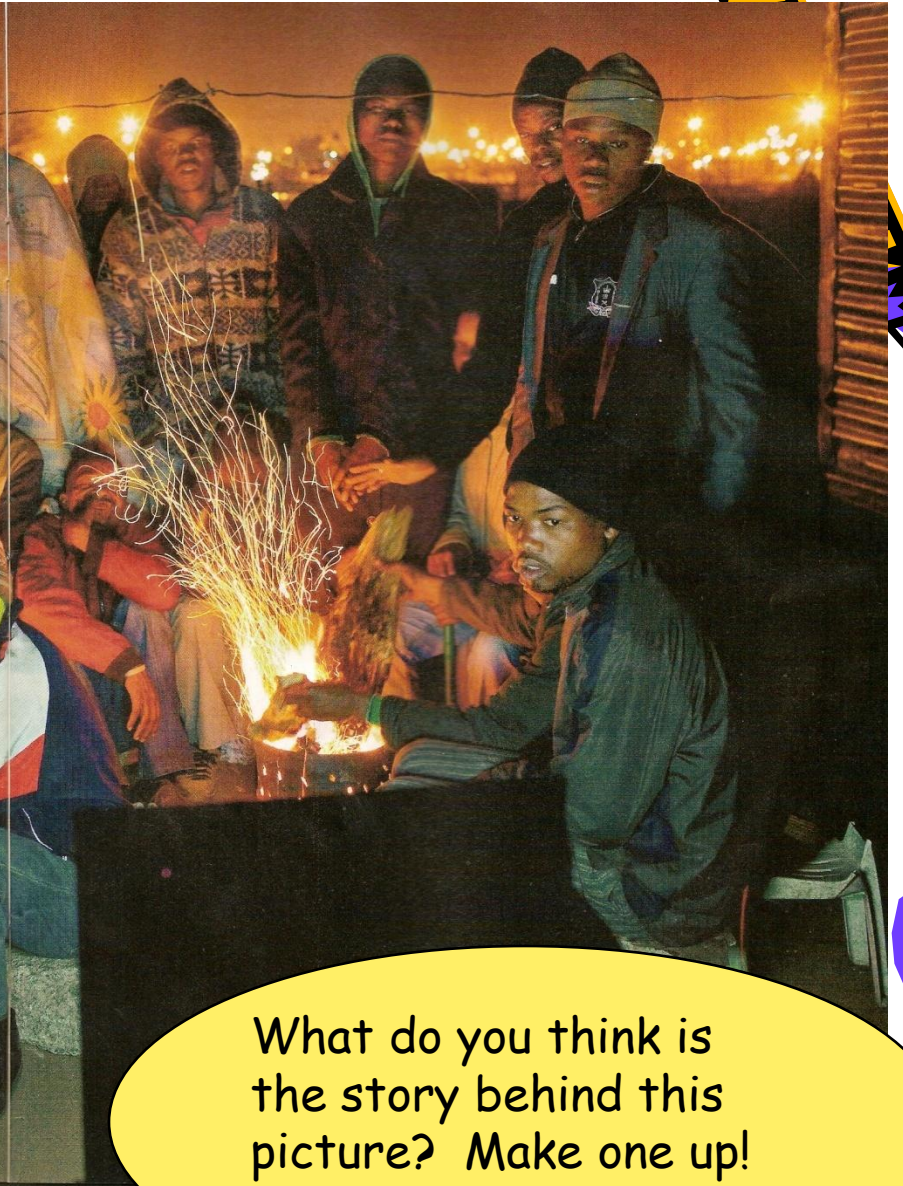
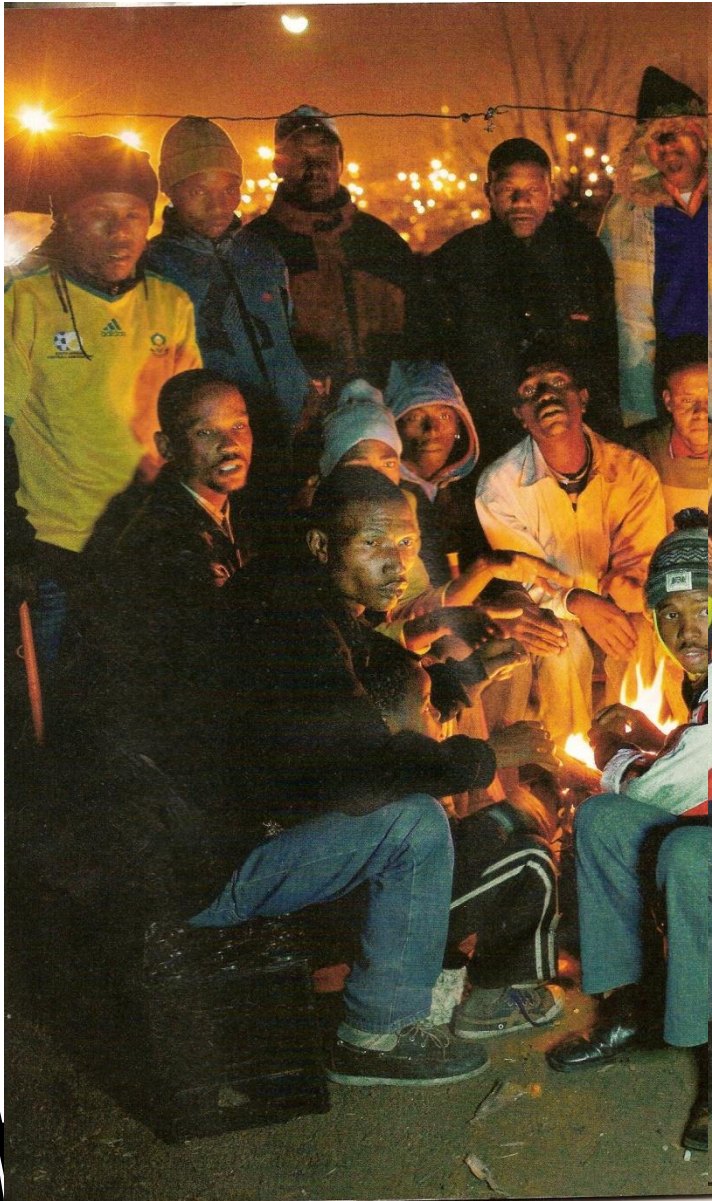


What do you think is the story behind this picture? Make one up!

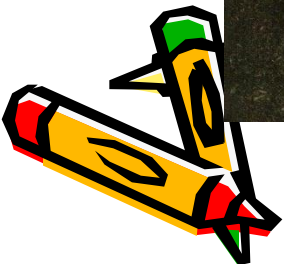


What do you think is the story behind this picture? Make one up!





What do you think is the story behind this picture? Make one up!



Snapshots & “Eddie Walker”



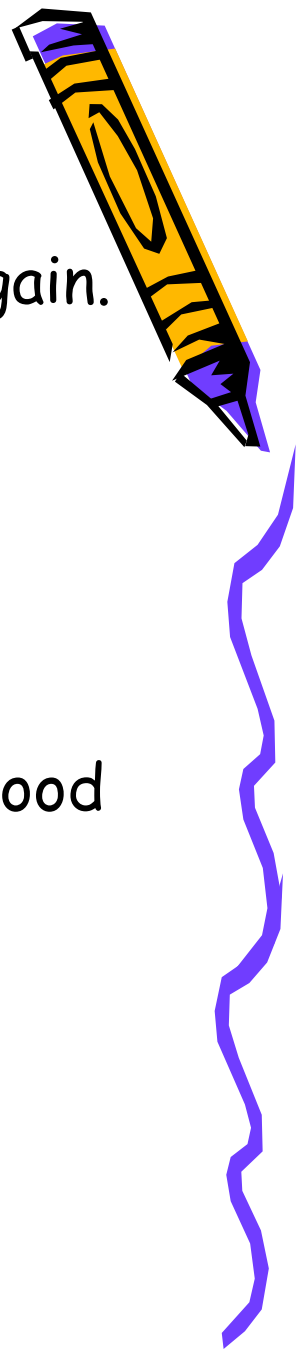
- Read the text aloud.
- What connections are there between the idea of snapshots and the lyrics of this song?
- How does each stanza act as a snapshot - a photograph with its own story?
- Play the song and follow along.



“Eddie Walker” by Ben Folds Five



Snapshots & “Eddie Walker”

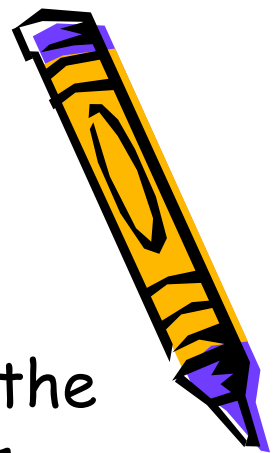


- Choose one of the stanzas and read it aloud again.
- What do you think happened?
- Copy the narrative as told by students.
- Look over the paragraph and evaluate it for “good story” criteria.
- Write the story for one of the other stanzas.



Personal Narrative Essay Assignment

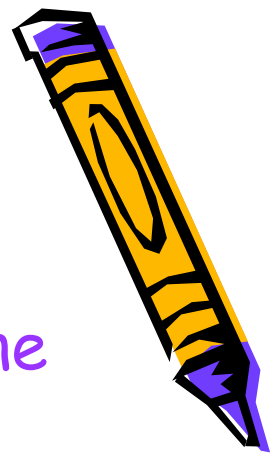
Life is about experiences and we live life by the way we handle and think about those experiences. We know that what happens to us in our life is what makes us who we are. This is your chance to reflect process and relate an experience or person that has been influential in your life. You will do this in the form of a personal narrative. **“A narrative essay re-creates an experience for a central purpose: usually to reveal an insight about the action or people involved.”**



Personal Narrative Essay Assignment

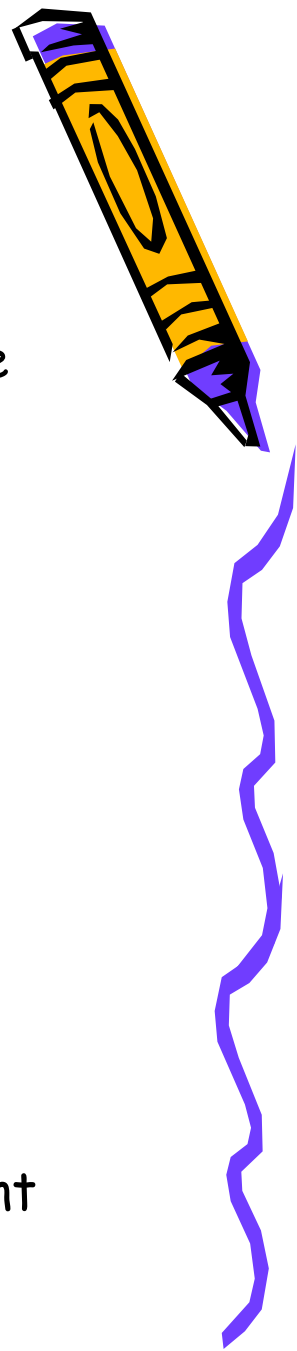
For this assignment, you will need to narrate one of the following events:

- A turning point in your life. This could be a time when you had to take responsibility for something, a time when you had to face a difficult challenge, a time when you learned to do something new, etc.
- A time when a person (or group of people) had an impact on your life. This may be a time when you encountered someone different from yourself, a time someone taught you something, etc.
- An adventure that tested you in some way. This may be a job you have had, a trip you took, a time when you and your friends did something different, etc.
- A photograph of a meaningful and significant event. Tell the story behind the picture.



As you write your essay make sure that you are following the following characteristics of narrative writing:

- identify the point of the narrative conflict
- develop only those details that advance the narrative point (the snapshot details)
- organize the narrative sequence
 - chronologically
 - flashback
 - flash-forward
- make narrative easy to follow
- make narrative vigorous and immediate
 - description
 - active verbs
 - dialogue
- keep verb tense and point of view consistent
 - present, past, future tenses
 - first, second, third person



Things to consider:

I will look at papers in terms of:

- What did you set out to do?
- Did you do that?
- Have you given your reader enough information to support yourself?

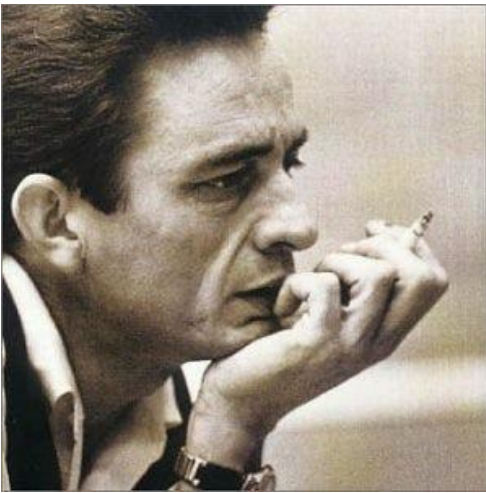
Papers are written to explain:

- Why should anyone care about this?
- You work to convince someone else that it matters and that it matters in a particular way.

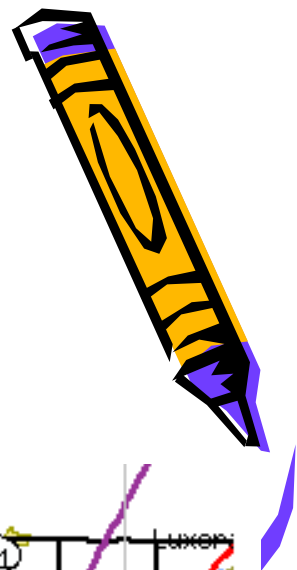


***Make
it
meaningful!***

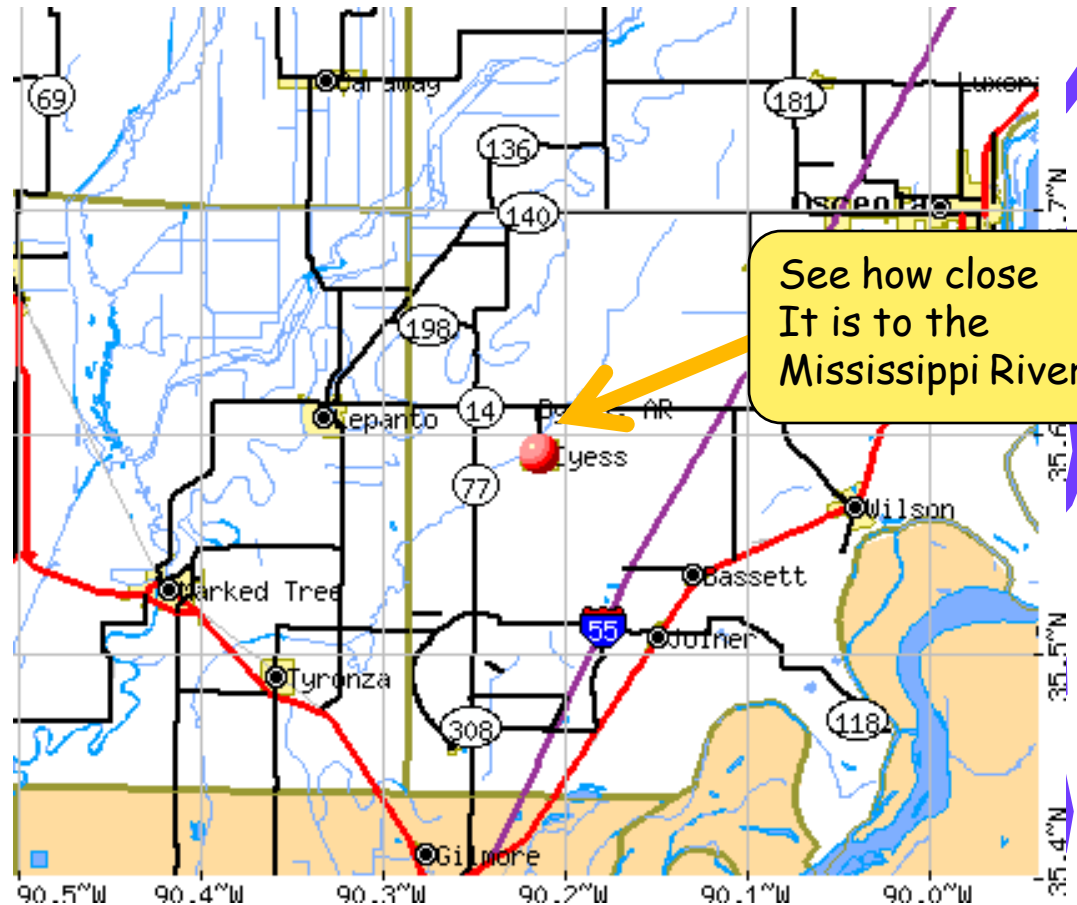




Johnny Cash - Personal Narrative



- Johnny Cash grew up in a small farming town in Arkansas named Dyess.
- His music frequently reflected his life experiences.



See how close
It is to the
Mississippi River



Johnny Cash - Personal Narrative

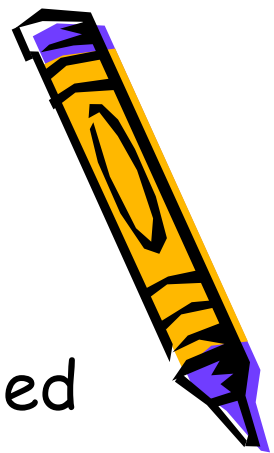


- Watch the video clip of Johnny Cash in concert performing his song “Five Feet High and Rising”.
- In this song, he sings about an event that occurred during his childhood.
- You will then work with a partner to analyze the lyrics, looking specifically for elements of personal narrative.



http://www.pbs.org/pov/johnnycash/video_classroom1.php

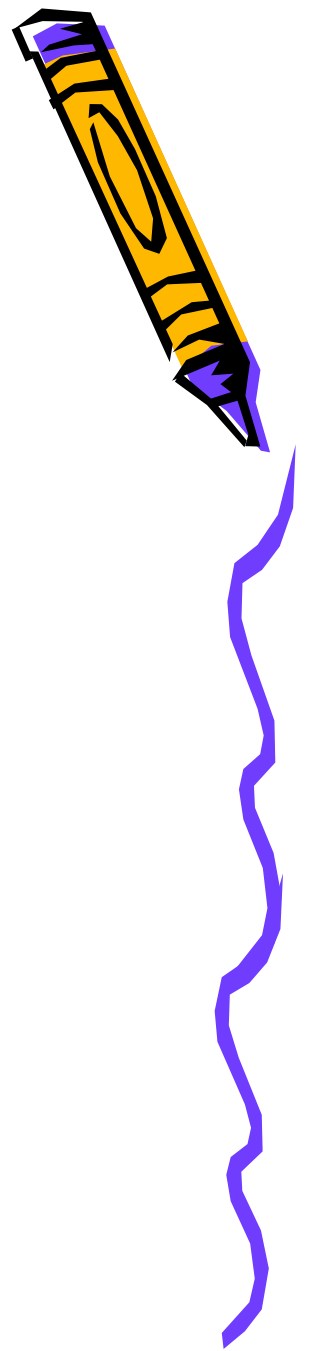
Your Personal Narrative



- You will now be using techniques like Cash used to develop your own personal narrative.
- First, let's recap what elements are included in personal narrative writing, and some writing tips.

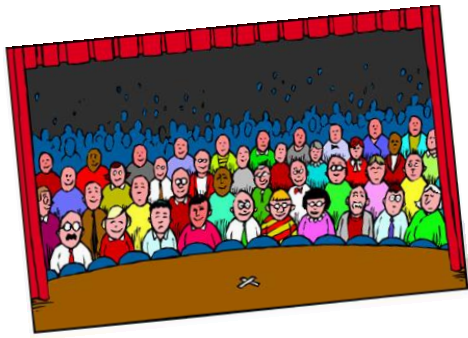


Characteristics of Narrative Writing:



- Plot
- Conflict
- Characterization
- Setting
- Theme
- Point of View
- Sequencing/
Organization
- Transitions





Tips for writing a personal narrative:



- **Purpose & Audience**

Personal narratives allow you to share your life with others and vicariously experience the things that happen around you. Your job as a writer is to put the reader in the midst of the action letting him or her live through an experience. Although a great deal of writing has a thesis, stories are different. A good story creates a dramatic effect, makes us laugh, gives us pleasurable fright, and/or gets us on the edge of our seats. A story has done its job if we can say, "Yes, that captures what living with my father feels like," or "Yes, that's what being cut from the football team felt like."



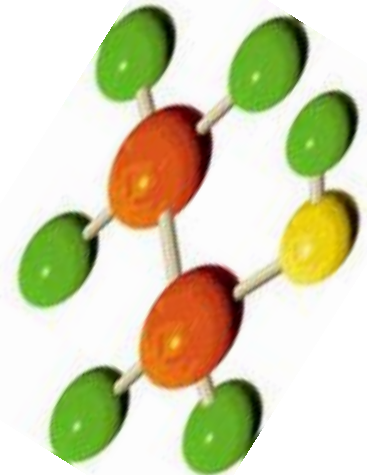
Tips for writing a personal narrative:

- Structure

There are a variety of ways to structure your narrative story. The three most common structures are:

- chronological approach,
- flashback sequence,
- reflective mode (the choice bits and pieces)

Select one that best fits the story you are telling.



Tips for writing a personal narrative:

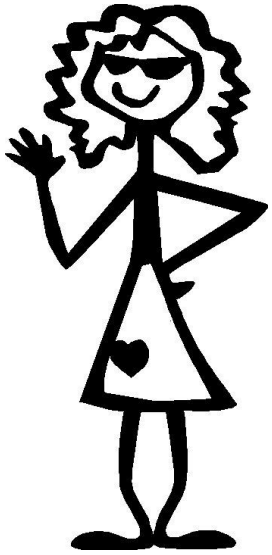
- **Show, don't tell:** Let the reader see, hear, smell, feel, and taste the experience directly, and let the sensory experiences lead him or her to your intended thought or feeling
- **Let people talk:** It's amazing how much we learn about people from what they say. One way to achieve this is through carefully constructed dialogue.
- **Choose a point of view:** Point of view is the perspective from which your story is told. It encompasses where you are in time, how much you view the experience emotionally (your tone), and how much you allow yourself into the minds of the characters.
- **Tense:** Tense is determined by the structure you select for your narrative. Consider how present vs. past tense might influence your message and the overall tone of your piece.
- **Tone:** The tone of your narrative should set up an overall feeling. Look over the subject that you are presenting and think of what you are trying to get across. Let the words you use create an overall feel.



Personal/ Narrative Recap

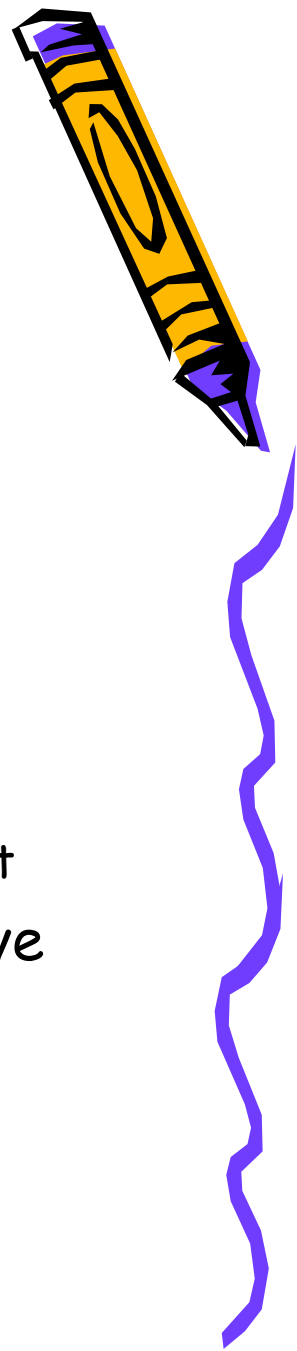


- Instead of trying to tell the whole story, tell the “snapshot” version - details about a specific moment in time (be brief!)
- Carefully select the details you want to share with your reader (be choosy!)
- Make the piece clear, realistic, and well-organized
- Grab the reader’s attention with specific and vivid word choices, and a unique voice (be clever!)
- Make sure there is good organization - intro, details/conflict/action and conclusion



Begin Pre-Writing

- List 5 experiences in your life that would make good subjects for personal narrative.
- Experiences might include:
 - a sickness or injury
 - preparing for a game or performance
 - achieving a milestone
 - facing a problem
 - a memorable vacation
 - Also check the 4 prompts on the assignment sheet
- You may use one of the photographs you have brought with you to write about.
- Conference with your partner to help determine which experience would be the most interesting.



Pre-Writing

- After you have chosen the experience you wish you write about:
 - Draw a picture of that experience (or use the photograph)
 - List sensory details (sights, sounds, smells, etc)
 - Complete the Graphic Organizer of story events (Story Map 2)

Begin writing!

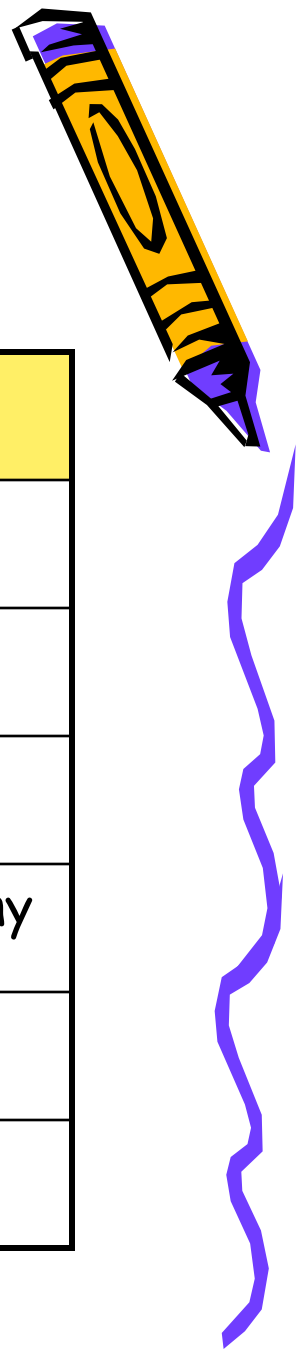


The difference words can make...

- **Denotation** - literal meaning of a word (dictionary definition)
 - Ex. Snake - a scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptile
- **Connotation** - associations or emotional connections to words
 - Ex. Snake - evil or danger



Check out some examples of synonyms that have very different connotations



Positive	Neutral	Negative
homeless	people	vagrants
lady	woman	chick
critter	animal	beast
svelte	slim	skinny/scrawny
home	house	Residence
little one	child	brat



Practicing with connotation

In each of the following cases, the original passage is fairly objective and colorless, using words with neutral connotations.

You will be asked to write two new versions of each passage: first, using words with positive connotations to show the subject in an attractive light; second, using words with negative connotations to describe the same subject in a less favorable way.

The instructions following each passage will guide you in making your revisions.



A. Gus cooked dinner for Merdine. He prepared some meat and vegetables and a special dessert.

(1) Describe the meal that Gus prepared, making it sound appetizing by using words with favorable connotations.

(2) Describe the meal again, this time using words with negative connotations to make it sound quite unappealing.



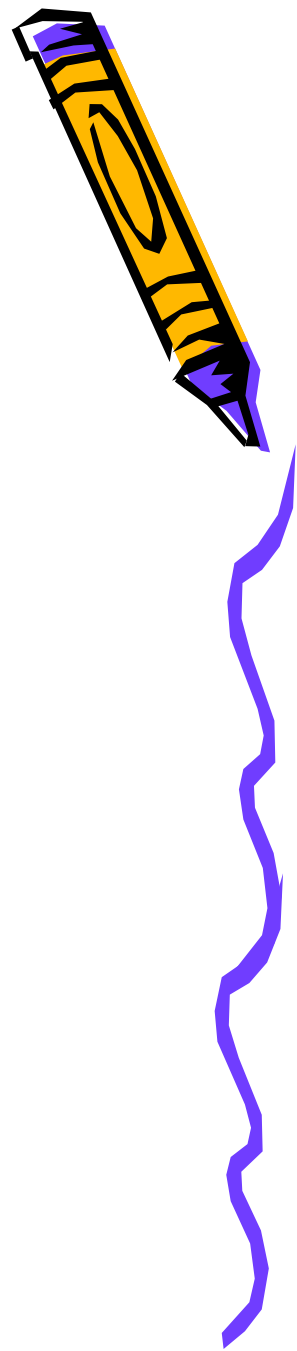
An appealing description

- Gus cooked a meal for his love, Merdine. He prepared juicy meat, steamed vegetables, and chocolate cake for dessert.
- Gus cooked a meal for royalty for Merdine. He prepared some tenderized meat, colourful vegetables and a rich dessert.



An unappealing description

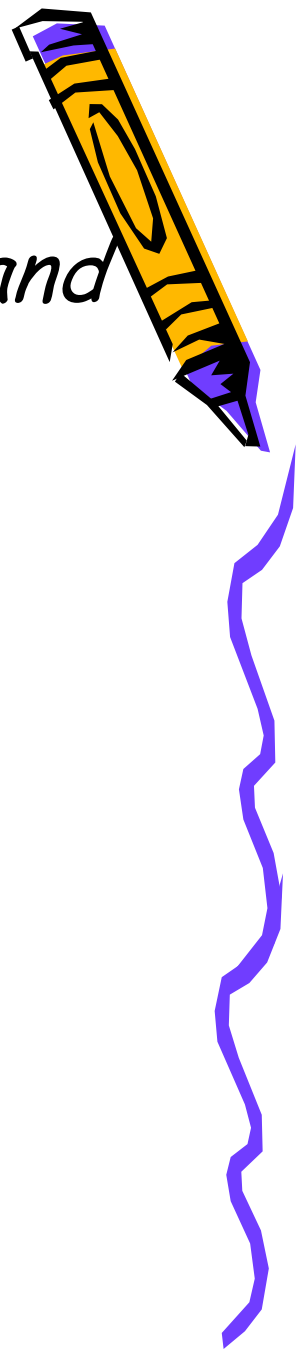
- Gus slopped together a meal for Merdine. He microwaved liver and onions with burnt cookies for dessert.



B. The person did not weigh very much. The person had brown hair and a small nose. The person wore informal clothing.

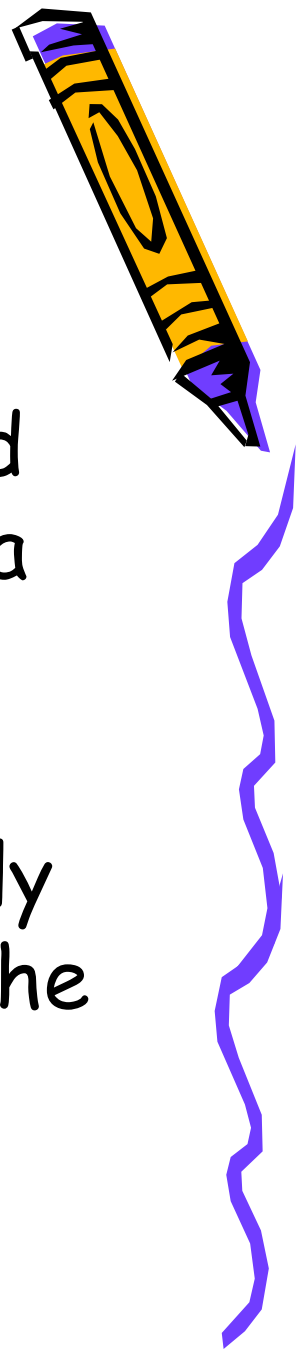
(1) Identify and describe this particularly attractive person.

(2) Identify and describe this particularly unattractive person.



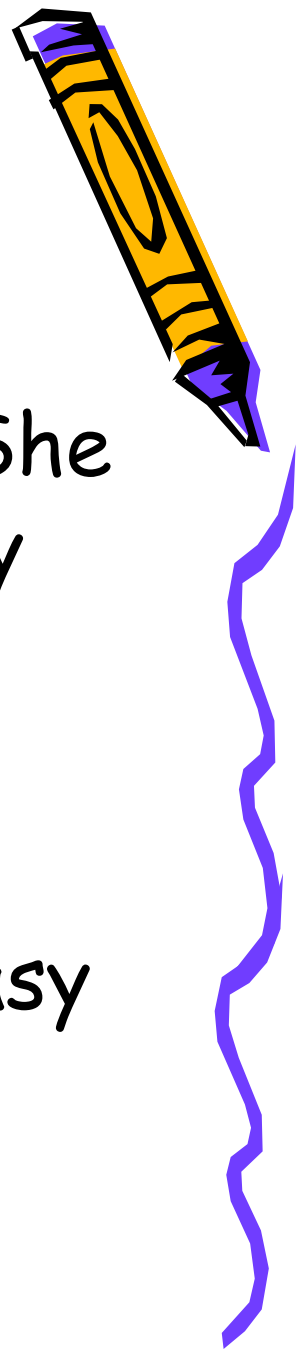
An appealing description

- The girl was very slender. She had smooth, mahogany brown hair and a petite nose. She loved to dress casually.
- Janice was very slim. She had curly brown hair and a ski-slope nose. She wore casual, effortless clothes.



An unappealing description

- The hottie was anorexic looking. She had smoky coloured hair and a puny nose. The sexy lady wore skanky clothes.
- The ugly anorexic thing with dirty hair and a turd nose and wore greasy clothes.



C. Douglas was careful with his money. He kept his money in a safe place. He bought only the necessities of life. He never borrowed or lent money.

(1) Choose words that show how impressed you are by Douglas's sense of thrift.

(2) Choose words that make fun of Douglas or pass scorn on him for being such a tightwad.



Creative Writing Exercises: The Differences of Style, Tone, Voice and So On



- Today's **creative writing exercise** is aimed at learning how to alter the style, tone, voice sentence structure and all the other elements that go into telling a story so as to be able to tell the story more effectively.
- There are different ways of telling every story and some are more effective than others. This exercise helps in determining which way of telling is the best for a given story and will help you learn how to manipulate the fictional elements to achieve the desired effect.
- It is also good for shelling out the character's voice, determining which tense is best or which narrative style the story should be told in.



Creative Writing Exercises: The Differences of Style, Tone, Voice and So On



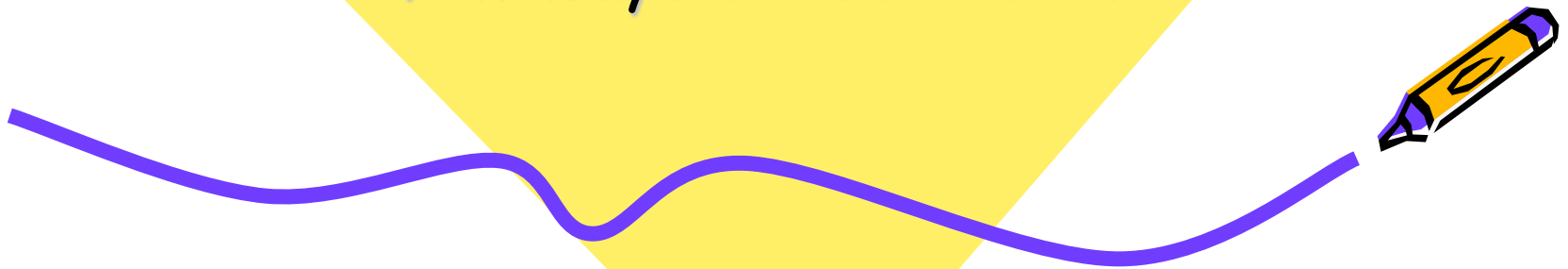
- Take a simple event:
 - a woman is walking alone through a park. She trips and almost falls, looks around embarrassed, and sees a man smiling at her.
- Now, describe this occurrence in five totally different ways (changes of tone, sentence structure, style, tense, voice, etc.), but make sure you retain the same setting and characters in all the versions.
- This exercise will be effective only if the five versions of this scene are completely different from each other.





Basic Essay Structure

A few ways to look at it...



Introduction:

Starts broad and goes to more focused/specific topic - has to grab your reader's attention

Body of Essay:

Paragraphs that include details and examples that support your topic. Remember to use PPE Method (Point, Proof and Explanation).

Conclusion:

Begins with specific topic, and expands to broader ideas - should leave your reader with a lasting impression, And sums up your ideas.

Keyhole

THE KEYHOLE TITLE

OPENING INVITATION

THESIS
(Last Sentence)

Standard Paragraphs, Each
with Topic Sentence

Present your weakest argument first.

Lead up to the strongest, which is the last in the body of your essay, whether your points are sentences or paragraphs.

Illustrate with facts and examples, in vivid and lively language.

THESIS REWORDED

Generalize again.

CLINCHER

(Your Final Sentence and Last Word)

BEGINNING PARAGRAPH

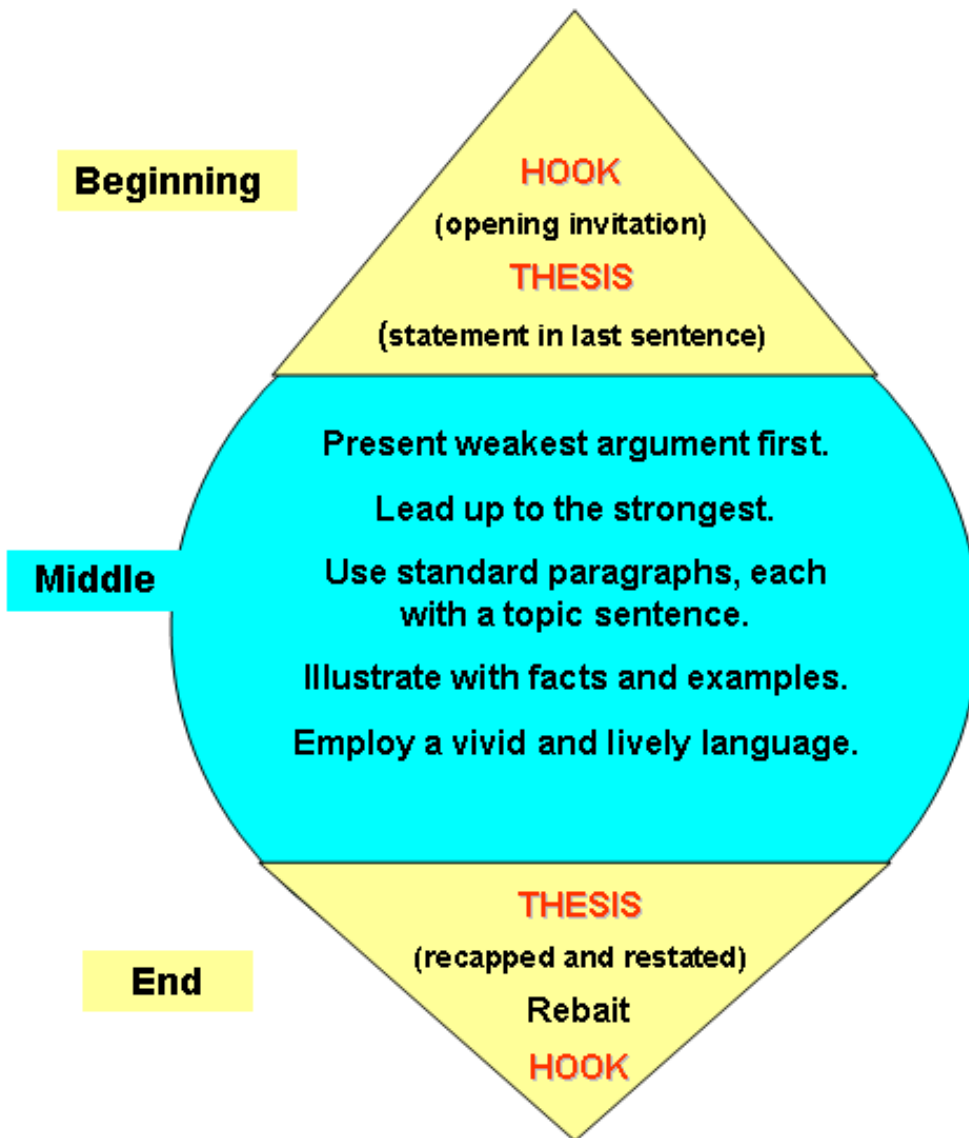
MIDDLE PARAGRAPH

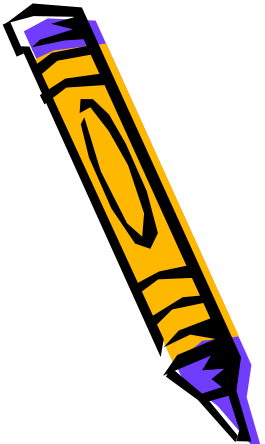
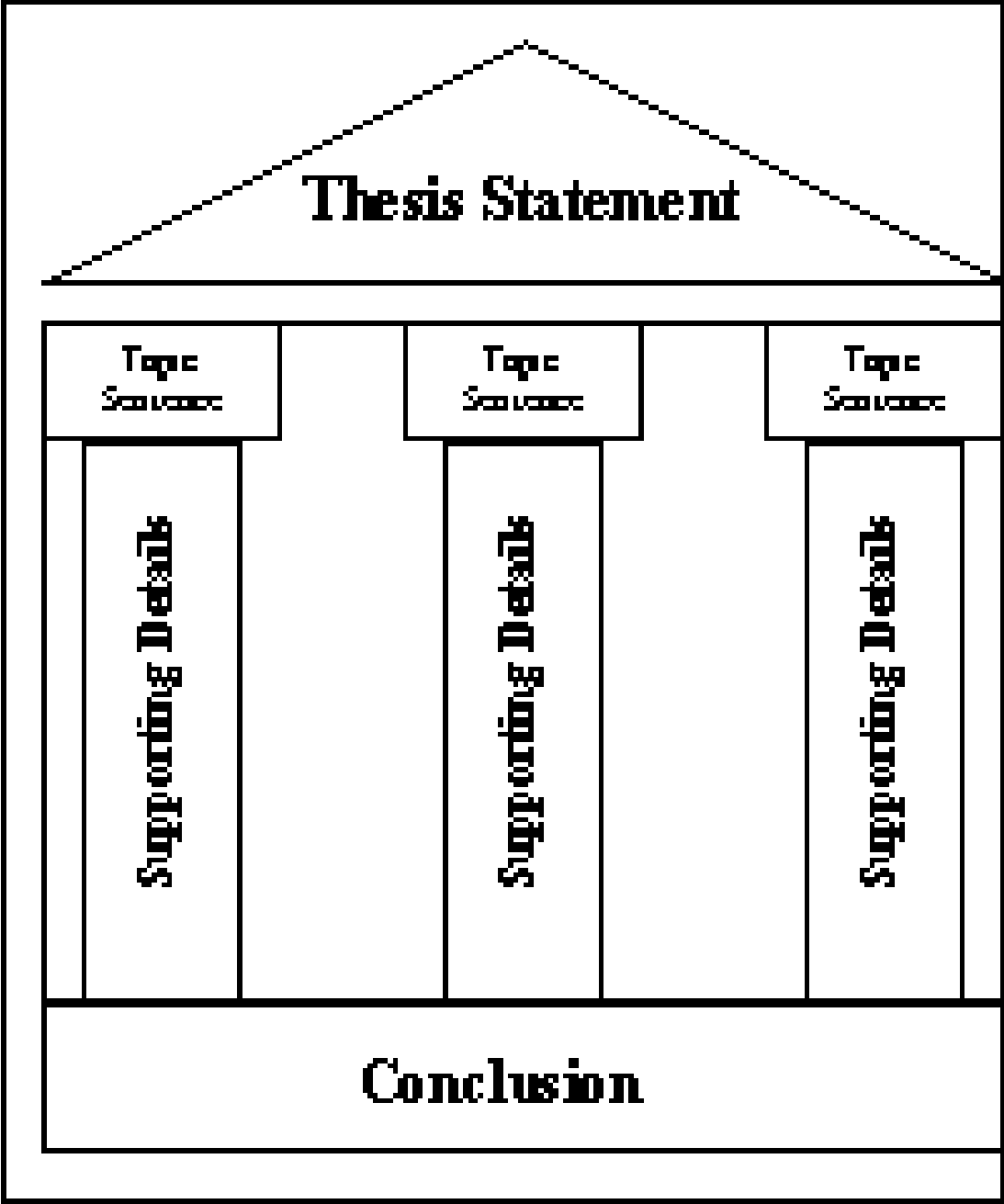
END PARAGRAPH

*Focal Points



Essay Diagram





Personal Narrative Analysis



- Choose one of the personal narrative samples from your duo tang (either *The Climb* or *The Boy with John Travolta Eyes*) and complete an analysis, in your reading response journal.
- For the analysis, respond to the following questions:
 1. Did the writer use sensory details about a specific moment in time? Explain, using examples.
 2. Is it a good story, meaningful/significant? Did it maintain your interest? Explain.
 3. Which writing trait was achieved most strongly? Explain, using examples.
 4. Which writing trait was the weakest? Explain, using examples. Offer suggestions for how it could have been improved upon.
 5. What was the overall tone of the piece? Explain, using examples.

In your journal, make sure to include:
Article title and author,
the date,
& purpose of entry
(analysis)

