What is a narrative?

A narrative is, simply put, a story. Whether the story is about how you met your best friend, what you did on spring break, or the events that led up to a major historical event, it is still a narrative. Narratives have two defining elements. First, they focus on a single event or a single set of closely related events. Second, they are organized chronologically. In other words, the events are organized according to what happened first then second then third, etc.

What makes a good narrative?

- **Introduction:** The introduction to a narrative is perhaps the trickiest part. You want to give an idea of what the narrative is about without giving away the whole story. You might think of it like the preview for an upcoming movie. In the introduction you should make it clear what the narrative is about and why it matters. You can do this by providing some context or background for the story, or by connecting the story to a larger important theme such as love or the importance of family.

- **Organization and Transitions:** As stated above, a narrative ought to be organized chronologically. Each body paragraph in the narrative ought to focus on one key event in the story. When moving to a new paragraph be sure to use transitions connected with time such as the following: *next, then, afterwards, later, before.*

- **Vivid details:** A good narrative will provide lots of details that will grab the reader’s attention. When thinking about such details, think about your five senses and consider what each of them would sense during the events of the narrative. For example instead of writing “The sprinkler was refreshing” try something more detailed such as “The cool water from the twisting sprinkler sprayed on our sweaty faces.”

**List of Vivid Detail Words**

**Sound Words:**

croaking, laughing, ringing, tinkling, barking, crunching, moaning, rumbling, thudding, bawling, crying, rustling, thumping, blaring, dripping, mumbling, scratching, ticking, booming, exploding, muttering, screaming, twittering, buzzing, fizzing, screeching, warbling

**Touch Words:**

abrasive, feathery, knobbed, sandy, spongy, biting, fine, lacy, scalding, steamy, boiling, fluffy leathery, scorching, steely, foamy, light, scratchy, sticky, bulky, freezing, lukewarm, scummy, stifled, bumpy, furry, matted, shaggy, stinging, burning, fuzzy, metallic, sharp, stony, bushy

**Taste and Smell Words:**

minty, rank, sweaty, acidic, earthy, sweet, acrid, moldy, rich, tangy, flowery, musky, rotten, tasteless, aromatic, fresh, musty, salty, biting, fruity, oily, vile, bitter, garlicky, perfumed, sharp
Sight Words:

glassy, stubby, tangled, bright, dim, radiant, neon, obscured, shadowy, blinding, colorful