

Narrative Paragraph

Lecture 01: Structure of narrative paragraphs

Time : 03 sessions

Objectives : By the end of the lecture students should be able to:

- * Identify the structure of the narrative paragraph.
- * Write good topic sentences suitable for narrative paragraphs.
- * Identify chronological order used in building the narrative paragraph.

To narrate is to tell a story or describe an incident. In a narrative, the topic is the incident or story and the controlling idea is the writer's attitude or feeling about the event. A strong controlling idea helps to focus the paragraph and helps the reader understand the writer's purpose.

Topic Sentence

- The topic sentence tells the reader what the story will be about.
- It may also tell when and where the story took place.
- The topic sentence should capture the reader's interest.

Supporting Sentences

- The supporting sentences tell the details of the story, including the sequence of events.
- They also include sensory details, such as what the author saw, heard, smelled, or tasted.
- Supporting sentences may also tell about the writer's feelings during the events.

Concluding Sentence

- The concluding sentence "wraps up" the story. It may include a comment about why the experience was important or how the writer felt after it.

Consider the following example:

Sometimes you can feel grateful not to get something you thought you really wanted. When I was 16, a local Italian-American organization offered a travel scholarship to three students. It sounded like an incredible opportunity. I immediately submitted my application for the scholarship. The three lucky students would go to Italy to study for the summer. They would live with Italian families and study Italian and other subjects at a local university. The scholarship would cover all the expenses including food. This was very

important to me because my father was a factory worker and my mother was a hairdresser, so money was tight. In addition, I was studying singing and loved opera. I was very excited about getting the chance to attend opera performances in Italy. In the end, a lot of students applied, so it was very competitive. When I found out I hadn't won a scholarship, I was so disappointed I almost cried. All of my dreams vanished. In order to make me feel a bit better, my mother bought tickets for the two of us to attend the performance of a local opera company. One of her clients from the hair salon arranged for us to go backstage after the performance. There I met the head of the opera company. When he heard that I wanted to be an opera singer, he invited me to audition for a summer internship with the company. I got the internship. Because of that, I got a scholarship to a great music school and finally got to Italy. But this time, I was actually singing in the opera rather than just watching it. I am so glad that I didn't get what I thought I wanted.

In this paragraph, the incident is applying for a travel scholarship, and the controlling idea is made me feel grateful. Now look at an analysis of the incident. Notice how the events and details support the controlling idea.

ANALYZING AN INCIDENT	
Events	Details
A scholarship was offered. I applied for the scholarship. My family didn't have a lot of money.	Students would study in Italy for the summer. It covered all expenses, including food. My father was a factory worker. My mother was a hairdresser.
I didn't win the scholarship.	I was so disappointed that I almost cried.
My mother bought tickets for the opera. I met the man who ran the opera company. He invited me to apply for a summer internship.	Her client arranged for us to go backstage. I told him I wanted to be an opera singer. I auditioned and got the internship.
I won a scholarship to music school. I traveled to Italy.	The school was prestigious. I sang in the opera in Italy.

Exercise 01: Read the following paragraphs and write a good topic sentence for each:

Paragraph 01

.....
 I had known Dax for about four years and thought he was a nice, honest guy. One day, he called me and told me about a problem

he was having. He had lent his car to his friend Paco, who had an accident and then lied to Dax about it. When Dax tried to collect the insurance, he lied to the insurance company, saying that he was driving the car. The insurance company found out Dax was lying, so they refused to pay to fix the car and sued Dax for lying. Dax had to pay to fix the car himself, and he had to get a lawyer to defend him. Within a month, he had spent four thousand dollars. After I heard Dax's story, I felt sorry for him. Even though I believe that money and friendship don't go together, I agreed to lend Dax two hundred dollars. He promised he would pay me at the end of the month. However, the next month, he called and said he didn't have the money. That situation continued for six months. After that, I gave up and didn't ask him for the money. Then, he had the nerve to call me and ask for another loan. I was amazed. I refused and told him I didn't have any money left. He said I was greedy. I told him he was a cheat and hung up the phone. Even though I felt sad to lose a friend over money, I think it was better to find out what kind of person he really was.

Paragraph 02

.....
..... It was a beautiful morning in Moscow, Monday, August 19, 1991. I woke up in a very good mood, looked out of the window, and determined that it was going to be a great day. I called my friend, who was to be my future wife. Her roommate picked up the phone and asked me if I knew what had happened last night. I said no. Then she told me there had been a coup. I did not believe her, so I turned on the TV. Since there was a symphony orchestra playing the same music on all channels, I knew something had happened. I turned on the radio and found a channel with a government announcement. The radio said that our president was sick and that strong people were needed to take over the government. The leaders of the coup arrested many people who opposed them, and it seemed that our country would become a dictatorship. I was so upset that I almost cried. However, I didn't know what to do. I was just one person. However, by the end of the day, I found a paper pasted to the wall in a train station. It said that people opposed to the coup should protest at the parliament building in order to protect democracy. I went to the protest and stayed there for two nights. I knew that it was dangerous, but I also knew that I didn't want to live in a country with a totalitarian regime anymore. In the end, we won and democracy was restored.

Exercise 02: Look again at Paragraphs in exercise 01 above and analyze them. On the left side, make a list of the events discussed in the paragraph. On the right side, make a list of the details that support the controlling idea.

Paragraph one

EVENT	DETAILS

Paragraph two

EVENT	DETAILS

Chronological Order

A narration is a type of writing in which the details or the ideas in a sequence of events or the steps of the process are arranged on the basis of time, chronological order. It refers to the time sequence of the story. Many writers prefer to narrate a sequence chronologically; starting at the beginning and stopping at the end. Others choose to recognize time in flashbacks. Here, the end of the story might be told first, with the beginning and middle added on to make the ending understandable.

Consider the following paragraph:

When I Refused To Listen to My Parents

When I was young, I often felt that my parents were overprotective. I usually didn't pay attention to their advice, until one day I almost paid a heavy price. In my country, Saudi Arabia, I used to go out with my brother, friends, or relatives to popular places on the weekends. I went to school from Saturday to Wednesday. Then, the weekend was from

Wednesday night to Friday. One Wednesday, after working hard at school, I had to do something fun. In the evening, I washed my father's car and called some of my friends to go out that night to King Fahad Park. At nine o'clock, I told my parents about my plans, but they didn't want me to go. They said it was too late, but I didn't listen to them. I went out anyway and drove to my friends' house to pick them up. While we were driving on the main road in the park, there was another car in the middle lane. Suddenly, the driver of that car turned into my lane without giving a signal. I switched on the bright lights, pounded on the horn, and stepped on the brakes, but nothing worked. The other car forced me to hit the wall on the side of the main road. When the car stopped, my friends and I got out. It was a miracle that nobody was hurt. My father's car was in bad condition; it looked like a pancake. At that moment, I remembered my parents' words when they didn't want me to go out. Later, the police came, and I arranged with a garage to fix my father's car. After three days, I told my father about everything. First, he wanted to know if anyone was hurt. Then he told me to be careful next time and scolded me. From then on, I have taken my parents' advice; I know they are only trying to help me.

Read the paragraph above and extract the events following the chart below.

Topic Sentence	
Background information	
Story	
Event 1	
Event 2	
Event 3	
Event 4	
Comment (Conclusion)	

Exercise 03: Read the following paragraphs then answer the questions:

Paragraph 01

I hate to be late and will do almost anything to be on time. However, I recently learned that being late for an event is better than not getting there at all. Two months ago, my family and I went out to celebrate my nephew's birthday. My two daughters were so happy. They like to go to my nephew's house because he has a lot of toys. That Sunday it was raining. My husband was driving the car. He hadn't slept very well the night before because he had to study very hard for a test on Monday. There was a brown car in front of us, and I was talking with my husband when this car stopped suddenly. The pavement was very slippery because of the rain, so we couldn't stop and the cars crashed. Everybody in the car was scared. My two daughters, who were sitting in the back seat, were crying. The first thing that came to my mind was them. Fortunately, none of us had any injuries. When I looked at my husband, his face was white. I think he was really scared for the children, too. Two hours after the accident happened, a policeman came and took information about the accident. He asked my husband and the other driver, who wasn't hurt, for their driver's licenses and insurance cards. The policeman was very nice. He said that my husband was guilty because he was supposed to stop. The insurance company paid everything for both cars. It wasn't a big accident, but we decided to go back home and rest. Two days later, we went to the doctor's office and he told us that our children were fine.

1. Underline the topic sentence and circle the controlling idea.
2. Is the paragraph unified? Do all the sentences support the controlling idea?
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3. Are the events in the incident in chronological order?
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4. What part of the paragraph did you enjoy the most?
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5. What part would you like to know more about? Why?
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Paragraph 02

One summer day when I was sixteen, my friend Steve and I were taking a new shortcut through the woods to visit another friend who lived in the country. His house was about five miles away by the road, but we figured the shortcut would cut it only three. After we had hiked about halfway, we came to creek. We studied it for a moment, thinking what to do. It was about 15 feet wide, and we guessed 6 or 8 feet deep; we had to either swim across or

walk perhaps miles out of our way trying to find a bridge. Steve, a devil-may-care type, quickly took off his boot and trousers, tied them all together and threw them across the creek, plunged in without further ado, and had soon swum to the other side- dripping wet, to be sure, but already needling me for still being on the wrong side of the creek. Not a good swimmer, I hesitated: How deep was the water? Could I dog- paddle across without sinking? The longer I delayed, the more energetically Steve taunted me for being “chicken”. Finally, I gathered my nerve took a deep breath, and fully dressed, jumped into the creek. The result was predictable: my boots instantly became waterlogged and dragged me down beneath the surface, I could barely move my legs and began floundering helplessly, rapidly getting panicky. Fortunately for me, Steve quickly understood the situation. As I failed about in the water, he leapt back into the creek and dragged me out safely on the other side. Ever since that day so many years ago when I almost drowned, I have had a healthy fear of anybody water more than 3 feet deep.

1. What kind of the developments is this paragraph? Explain.

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2. Underline the topic sentence. Why do you think the author placed it there?

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3. Circle the controlling idea.

4. Is the paragraph coherent? Is it unified? Explain.

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5. Extract from the above paragraph two adverbial clauses of time.

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TD One: Writing Task

Time : 02 sessions

Objectives : By the end of this practice students should be able to :

- *Write good plans for narrative paragraphs.
- * Write a first draft of a narrative paragraph following a chronological order.
- * Edit their first drafts.

Your Turn: Writing Task

Write a narrative paragraph about something happened while you were in your summer holiday. In your writing follow these steps:

1. **Brainstorm:** *Brainstorm ideas, memories, and time and place.
*Brainstorm vocabulary (use it in clear sentences about the topic).
2. **Organize your writing (Planning)**

Topic sentence:

What is the story about? Where and when did it take place?

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Supporting sentences

What happened first?

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What happened next?

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What else happened ?

How did the experience end?

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Concluding sentence

What was important about the experience? How did it affect you?

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1. Write your first draft.

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2. Edit your draft using the checklist

Editor's Checklist

Put a check (✓) as appropriate. Write answers in complete sentences in the lines provided.

1. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence that tells what the story will be about?

2. Do the supporting sentences tell the details of the story?

3. Does the writer use sensory and emotional details? If so, what sensory and emotional details are included? _____

4. Does the writer use sequence words and transition words to explain the order of the events in the story? If so, which ones? _____

5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that "wraps up" the story? Does it include a comment about the experience? If so, what is the comment? _____

3. Write your final version of the paragraph

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Lecture 02: Composition Skills

Time : 03 sessions

Objectives: By the end of this lecture students should be able to :

- *Use transitional words and phrases appropriately in narrative paragraphs.
- *. Uses past tenses correctly in narrative paragraphs
- * Use emotional and sensory details in narrative paragraphs.

Linking Words/ phrases

In narration, the writer needs to show the relationship of events in time. Transitional words or *phrases expressing time* such as: soon, immediately, afterwards, as soon as, are commonly used to achieve coherence. We are familiar with such *ordering expressions* as first, second, third, finally, later, next, last, etc. We can use them to direct the traffic in our stories. When we use flashbacks, we need words and phrases like: earlier, all at once, and so on.

The writer can also make the time clear by using connecting words—either prepositions of time or subordinators in adverbial clauses of time. Study the examples in the chart.

Prepositions of time: after (a moment) at (ten o'clock); at noon by (ten o'clock); by then during (the morning); during that time from (six o'clock) to (seven o'clock) from then on in (May); in (2009) on (Saturday) one (day, time) (three days) later until (six o'clock); until then.

Subordinators: while when as whenever before after until as soon as the mom

Read the following paragraph. Underline the linking words and the adverbial clauses that contributed in making the paragraph coherent.

When people here talk of Mardi Gras, they use the expression “Mardi Gras Madness.” For many people, this delightful madness begins on St. Charles Avenue with the Rex Parade. By nine o'clock, the avenue is lined with people of all ages in colorful costumes, from cavemen to Supermen. They stroll among the crowd and chat with friends and strangers alike. Some dance and some drink. At around ten o'clock, the excitement mounts as the parade begins. First, there is the welcome sound of sirens. The police on motorcycles always lead the parade to make a path through the jubilant crowd. Then a band usually marches by, playing a popular tune such as the theme from a recent movie. At this time people start clapping and dancing to the music. Next come the masked men on horseback. They wave and the crowd waves back. Sometimes a girl goes up and kisses one of the

riders! Finally, someone usually shouts, “There it is!” It is the first float carrying men in costumes and masks. Immediately, everyone rushes toward the float. They wave their hands and yell, “Throw me something, Mister!” The men throw beads and souvenir coins to the excited crowd. Usually, they catch the coins, but sometimes one hits the ground. Then several people rush to retrieve it, pushing and shoving if necessary. Then the float passes, but soon another one comes, and the madness continues. After about an hour, the parade passes by, and the first part of Mardi Gras day ends.

Exercise 04: Read the following narrative paragraph and insert the suitable connecting words. Underlined the adverbial clauses:

When I started to work here in New Orleans, something really funny happened that taught me I should not be afraid to ask questions. My mother got me a job at the Marriott Hotel as a cocktail waitress. I was really nervous because I had never worked before., I trained for two days, but I didn't speak English at all except for one or two expressions. I tried to memorize the keys of the cash register, but that was the only thing I could do. When my training was over, I was supposed to start on my own. From that moment, it was a terrible experience., I had my first customer. I went to the table and I said, “Hello, how are you doing? Can I get you something?” The lady said, “Yes, I would like a glass of water and a grasshopper.” I went to the bar, but I was afraid that I had misunderstood. I knew that a grasshopper was an insect, but that didn't make sense. I was too afraid to ask because I was sure that she hadn't actually said the word “grasshopper,” so I just got the glass of water. I went to the table, and said, “Sorry, we don't have it.” The lady started talking wildly. I realized something was wrong, so I said, “I'm sorry.” I went back to the bar and gave the bartender the order. She explained that it was an alcoholic drink and she fixed it for me. I laugh when I think about how stupid I looked because I was afraid to ask a question

Language Focus: Tense Consistency

In narrating, writers need to respect the following points in using past tenses:

1. Use the simple past for habitual and non-habitual actions in the past.
I **walked** in and **saw** her in the chair.
I **walked** to school every day when I **was** young.
2. Use the past continuous for continuous actions in the past.

I **was talking** while he was studying. Everyone **was studying** when I walked into the room.

3. Use used to or would for habitual actions in the past that are no longer true.

I **used to** exercise every day, but now I don't.

When I was a child, I **would** often spend time alone.

My First Job

The happiest day of my life is when I get my first job last year. After college, I try and try for six months to get work with an advertising firm, but my luck is bad. Finally, one day while I was eating a sandwich in a downtown coffee shop, my luck will begin to change. A young woman who was sitting next to me asks if she could read my newspaper. I say okay, and we start talking. She begins to tell me that she is an executive in a huge advertising company and is looking for an assistant. I will tell her that I am very interested in mass communications and study it for four years at the university. She gives me her business card, and within one week, I am her administrative assistant. It is the best lunch of my life.

Read the above paragraph and underline all the verbs. Identify the tense used. Do you think they go with narrating story? If no, make corrections.

Exercise 05: Read the following paragraph then fill in the blanks with the appropriate verb in the appropriate tense:

One summer day when I was sixteen, my friend Steve and I were taking a new shortcut through the woods to visit another friend who lived in the country. His house about five miles away by the road, but we figured the shortcut would cut it only three. After we had hiked about halfway, we to creek. We studied it for a moment, thinking what to do. It was about 15 feet wide, and we 6 or 8 feet deep; we had to either swim across or walk perhaps miles out of our way trying to find a bridge. Steve, a devil-may-care type, quickly took off his boot and trousers, them all together and threw them across the creek, plunged in without further ado, and had soon to the other side- dripping wet, to be sure, but already needling me for still being on the wrong side of the creek. Not a good swimmer,: How deep was the water? Could I dog- paddle across without sinking? The longer I delayed, the more energetically Steve taunted me for being “chicken”. Finally, I my nerve took a deep breath, and fully, jumped into the creek. The result was predictable: my boots instantly became waterlogged and me down beneath the surface, I could barely move my legs andfloundering helplessly, rapidly getting panicky. Fortunately for me, Steve quickly the situation. As I failed about in the water, he back into the creek and dragged me out safely on the other

side. Ever since that day so many years ago when I almost drowned, I a healthy fear of anybody water more than 3 feet deep.

Rhetoric Focus:

In order to make narrative paragraphs interesting and vivid for readers, writers use sensory details and emotional details that help the readers share the experience of the story. Sensory detail and emotional detail are more likely to engage and affect the reader as they information about how something looks, smells, tastes; feels or what it sounds like.

Examine the following examples:

My teeth were chattering, and my legs felt like jelly.

The morning sun warmed my back.

The sun was setting behind low, gray-blue storm clouds.

The sounds of emergency sirens awakened the still roads.

Suddenly, my fear vanished, and I felt confident as I looked out at the crowd.

The sight filled me with excitement.

Exercise 06:

Read the sentences below and write S next to the sentences that contain emotional details:

1. The morning mist brought in smell of the ocean.....
2. We were very nervous, so we called the police.....
3. I had never felt such happiness.....
4. The dates were sticky and sweet, and they were delicious.....
5. I felt a sharp pain in my ankle, and I recognized the sting of a jellyfish.....
6. We could hear the roar of the waterfall for a long time before we actually saw it...

Exercise 07: Use sensory details to support the following sentences:

1. Our guide had an interesting fashion sense.
He wore the same khaki pants every day, but the shirts always had colorful patterns of flowers, or other tropical scenes.
2. We ate a wonderful meal.
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.....
3. The flower was delightful.

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4. The alley had not been taken care of for many years and it was in bad shape.

 5. My father taught me to swim in a river behind our house.

 6. My mother's kitchen was everyone's' favorite room.

Exercise 08: Read the teacher's comments and the narrative paragraphs. Match the teacher's comments to the corrections needed in the paragraphs.

1. Your first sentence is too specific to be a topic sentence. Who is "her"? Your topic sentence should tell the reader what the paragraph is going to be about.
2. Be careful of the verbs. They jump from the present to the past tense.
3. Your paragraph is excellent The topic sentence sets up the rest of the paragraph very nicely. You also use good supporting sentences and correct verbs.
4. Your paragraph is good. However, you did not indent the first line of your paragraph.
5. Be careful with correct paragraph form. This is not a narrative paragraph-it is a descriptive one. Follow directions more carefully.

An Unfortunate Family Dinner

My family and I went to her house almost every Sunday, but this one time her food almost made me sick. when I sat down at the table, she put some food on my plate. It looked like an old fishing net. I asked her what kind of food it was, but she just said that it was healthy and tasty. I looked around the table and saw that everyone else was eating, even my little brother. Without thinking about it, I put some of the reddish brown food in my mouth. Two seconds later I ran rnto the bathroom and spit everything out. It was the most terrible stuff I had ever eaten! Later that night my grandmother told me what the food was: fried tripe and cow tongue.

Brandy's Luck

I will never forget an awful experience that almost took my favorite dog Brandy's life. I always played with Brandy in our front yard every day after school. One day while we were playing, Brandy saw a cat on the other side of the street. She did what any normal dog would do; she started to run across the street to get the cat. I screamed for her to come back, but she did not listen. Suddenly, a car appeared and hit her. The driver of the car was very nice and immediately took Brandy to the neighborhood veterinarian. The vet had to operate on Brandy's leg and put her leg in a cast. When my dog finally returned home, she was almost as good as new. From that day, she never left our front yard again.

My Favorite Place

My bedroom is small but comfortable. The walls are covered with posters and banners of my favorite sports teams. On the left side, there is a twin bed that I have had since I was ten years old. Next to the bed is my dresser. It is blue and white with gold knobs. Beside the dresser is my bookshelf, which holds most of my schoolbooks, dictionaries, and Kurt Vonnegut novels. Across from the bookshelf, you can see my closet. It is too small to hold all my clothes, so some of my stuff has permanent residence on my chair. The clothes get wrinkled there, but I do not mind. My mom does not like it that my room is so messy, so one of these days I am going to clean it up and make her happy.

A Travel Nightmare

When I decided to travel across Europe with a backpack, I did not think I would meet the local police. My best friend and I were sitting in Frankfurt on a train bound for Paris when the nightmare began. A young man comes to the window of the train and asks me what time the train leaves. It took us only ten seconds to open the window and answer him. When we turned away from the window and sat down in our seats, we noticed that our backpacks were missing. Quickly, we got off the train and went to the police headquarters inside the station. We explained what happened. The police officers did not look surprised. They say it is a common way of stealing bags. One person stays outside the train and asks a passenger for help or information. While the passenger is talking to this person, someone else comes quietly into the train car and steals bags, purses, or other valuables. The "team players" are so good at it that they can steal what they want in less than three seconds. The police officers tell us that there is really nothing we can do, but they suggest that we look through the garbage cans and hope that the robbers took only our money and threw our passports and bags away. We looked and looked, but we never found our bags. The next morning we were not in Paris; we were at our embassy in Frankfurt, waiting for duplicate passports.

The Trick That Failed

Twin brothers Freddie and Felix often played tricks at school, but one day they went too far. On that day, they decided to try to cheat on a French exam. Freddie was very good at learning languages and was always the best student in both Spanish and French. Felix, however, excelled in mathematics. He was not interested in languages at all. When Felix discovered that he had to take a standardized exam in French, he asked his brother for help. The day of Felix's test, they met in the boys' restroom during lunch and switched clothes. Freddie went to his brother's French class and took the test for him. Meanwhile, Felix followed Freddie's schedule. After school, the twins laughed about their trick and headed home. As they entered the house, their mother called them into the kitchen. She was furious! She had received a phone call from the school principal. The French teacher had found out about the trick. "How did he know?" cried Felix. "Easily," replied his mother. "Everyone at the school knows that one obvious difference between you and your brother is that you are right-handed and Freddie is left-handed. While the French teacher was grading the tests, he noticed that the check marks on the test were made by a left-handed person." Felix and Freddie got into a lot of trouble that day, but they learned a valuable lesson-and they never cheated again.

TD Two: Writing Assignment

Time : 02 sessions

Objective: By the end of this practice students should be able to write good narrative paragraphs respecting all its features and following all stages of writing.

Writing Assignment

Select two of the following topics and write two narrative paragraphs:

1. Someone you know got out of trouble.
2. An important lesson that you learned.
3. The most frightening (or happy or difficult) experience you have ever had.
4. Your memory of a significant historical, political, or social event.
5. An early memory of one of your parents.
6. A reunion with a relative or friend you had not seen in a long time.

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