

6th Grade Narrative Essay: Organization

The purpose of writing a narrative is to entertain readers while also inviting them to think about an important theme (or message)—a larger lesson about life or human nature. To convey the theme of a story, writers need to consider how to structure the story and organize the events in a way that makes sense.

Experienced writers carefully choose a **narrative text structure** that best suits their story. Most narratives use chronological (or sequential) text structure. To put it in simpler terms, this organization of a text is also called time order. It means that an author (or narrator) tells the events in the order in which they happen in a story. By telling what happens first, second, third, and so on, an author is giving the sequence of events. Along the way, this text structure enables the author to establish the setting, the characters, and the conflict (or problem) of the plot. Telling the events in time order also allows the characters and the action of the plot to move forward, through the middle of the story, when the main character (or characters) will attempt to resolve the conflict, or solve the problem. Finally, the story ends with the resolution of the conflict.

Sometimes instead of moving the plot forward in time and action, the plot moves the action backward in time, or even starts the action in the middle of the story. For example, if the story is character-driven, the plot might focus on the character's internal thoughts and feelings, so the writer might begin with a flashback to establish the character's issues or situation before moving into the present time. Similarly, if the story is a mystery, the writer might start the story in the middle to build suspense by making readers question why the person was murdered, for example, and "who done it." To organize their story, writers often use a sequence-of-events chart, a timeline, or a flow chart. This type of graphic organizer will help them visualize and plot the order of events

Ask Yourself:

- Should I tell the story in the order that the events happen?
- Should I use a flashback at the beginning or start in the middle to create mystery and suspense?
- Who are my characters and how will they grow or change?
- What will be the most exciting moment of my story?
- How will my story end?

***Hint** Writers often use transition words and phrases to hint at the narrative's overall organization and the structure of individual sections or paragraphs:

- Time order: *before, after, now, soon, in the meantime*
- Cause-effect: *because, so, therefore, as a result*
- Compare-contrast: *like, similarly, in the same way* to compare and *although, while, but, however, on the other hand* to contrast
- Order of importance: *mainly, most important, to begin with*

YOUR TURN:

By using an Organize Narrative Writing timeline, you'll be able to fill in the events for your story that you began to consider during the prewriting stage of your Extended Writing Project. When you've completed your organizer, trade with a partner and offer each other feedback on the structure of events the writer has planned, and the use of transitions to make shifts in time order and setting clear for the reader.

Event #1:	Introduce Characters and Setting
Event #2:	Exposition & Inciting Incident
Event #3:	Rising Action-Conflict or Complication #1
Event #4:	Rising Action-Conflict or Complication #2
Event #5:	Rising Action-Conflict or Complication #3
Event #6:	Climax
Event #7:	Falling Action—Start to wrap it up
Event #8:	Ending-All problems are solved

Is the theme clearly demonstrated in these sections?