

Narrative *Writing*

Topics Include:

Plot, Characters,
Dialogue, Setting,
Conflict, Climax

To the Student



*How about it?
Can you count on your
writing skills to make
your meaning clear?*

*Check yourself out
by answering the
following questions!*

- ▶ Can you give other people easy-to-follow directions and explanations?

EXAMPLES: **how to tape a TV show**
how a bill becomes law

- ▶ Can you describe something clearly enough to create a vivid image in the minds of your audience?

EXAMPLES: **a dramatic thunderstorm**
a movie star's mansion

- ▶ Can you tell a story so well that your audience is fascinated from beginning to end?

EXAMPLES: **the history of baseball**
the world's worst date

- ▶ Can you usually persuade others to accept your opinion or take some kind of action?

EXAMPLES: **see a certain movie**
register to vote

Saddleback's WRITING 4 series will improve your written work—no matter what your purpose is for writing. If you make your best effort, the result will surprise you. You'll discover that putting words on paper isn't that much different from saying words out loud. The thought processes and grammatical structures are the same. Writing is just another form of expression; skill develops with practice!

Competent writers do better at school and at work. Keep that in mind as you work your way through these books. If you learn to write well, you're more likely to succeed in whatever you want to do!

*Are you ready to go for it?
Follow me—I'm off and running!*



Lesson

1

Friendly Letter

When you write a narrative, you are telling a story. Who's a better audience for your story than a friend? One way we tell our friends stories is by writing letters. Good topics for letters include the interesting things that happen to us during the day.

A. In your letter to a friend, elaborate on this sentence: "You won't believe what happened today!"

Before you begin your letter, write some notes, using the 5Ws + H formula (who, what, when, where, why, and how).



WHO? (Who was involved? Did you see or talk to someone you know personally, someone you know by reputation, or a stranger? Describe the person.)

WHAT? (What happened? What did the person say or do? What did you say or do?)

WHEN? (When did this happen? Describe the time of day.)

WHERE? (Where were you? Where was the other person? Describe the setting.)

WHY? (What caused the event? Tell the reasons why the event happened.)

HOW? (How did you react? How did the other person react? How did the situation get resolved?)

B. Now, use the notes you wrote in Part A to help you write a friendly letter. Because you're writing to a friend, make sure your tone is friendly, too. Follow these tips:

- Include details that your friend would understand, appreciate, and enjoy.
- Use figurative language (such as similes, metaphors, hyperbole, irony, or personification) to describe characters and settings. (If you've forgotten what these words mean, look them up in a dictionary.)
- Use the proper form for a friendly letter. Include the date in the upper right area of the letter. Use a friendly greeting followed by a comma and a friendly closing followed by a comma.

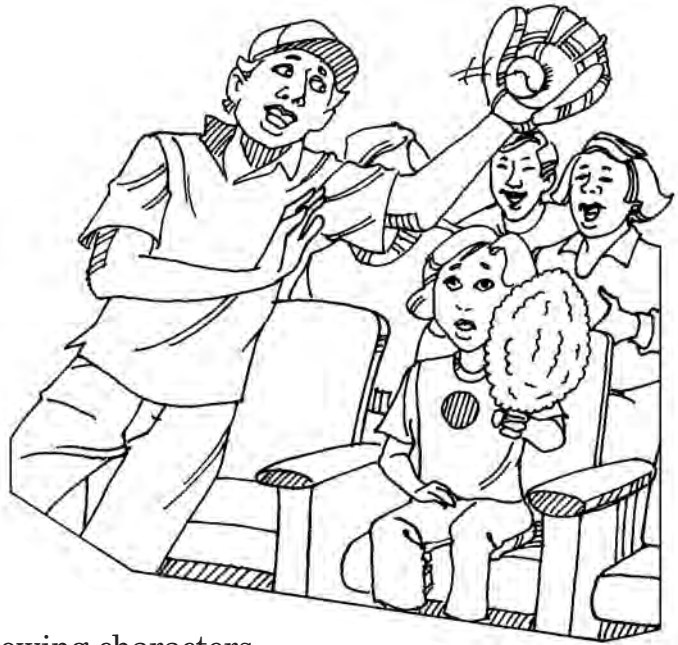
The form consists of a large rectangular area enclosed in a thin black border. It is designed for writing a friendly letter. At the top right, there is a short horizontal line. Below this, on the left side, is a horizontal line. The main body of the letter is composed of 15 horizontal lines. At the bottom right, there is a dashed line for the signature, with the text "(YOUR SIGNATURE)" centered below it. Directly under the dashed line is a solid horizontal line.

Lesson

2

Everyday Experiences

Normal, daily happenings can be a good source of ideas for narrative writing. With enough detail and colorful description, even ordinary events can be made to sound interesting. For example, a visit to a grocery store might be commonplace to you. To a baby, however, it's a new experience full of bright colors, lights, people, sounds, aromas, and products. A visitor from another country might also find an American grocery store quite exotic. Point of view makes all the difference.



A. In what way might each of the following characters experience the circumstances described? Write a sentence that expresses the character's unique point of view. This first one has been done as an example.

1. A four-year-old goes to her first professional baseball game with her father.

Daddy and I had fun at the ball game. We cheered for our team and ate lots of yummy treats.

2. A young father takes his four-year-old to her first professional baseball game.

3. A rookie steps up to the plate for his first at-bat in a professional baseball game.

4. The pitcher reacts as the rookie hits a home run.

5. The outfielder reacts as the ball sails over his head and into the stands.

6. A fan in the bleachers catches the home run ball.

7. The four-year-old girl tastes her first cotton candy.

B. Now choose an everyday experience that is familiar to you. Write about it from six different points of view. This means trying to imagine the experience as seen through other people’s eyes. Ask yourself how the same sights, sounds, aromas, and tastes might seem different to different people. The answer to this will give you ideas for your writing.

Everyday experience: _____

1. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

2. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

3. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

4. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

5. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

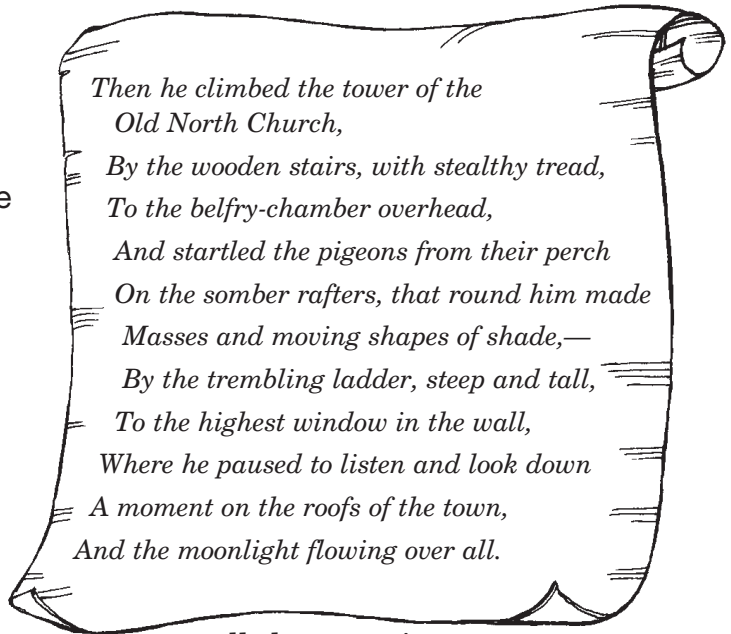
6. **from** _____ **'s point of view**

Lesson

3

What Happened Next?

Most narratives are told in chronological order (the order in which the events occur). A good example is the narrative poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. In this poem, the narrator tells the story of “the midnight ride of Paul Revere” from start to finish.



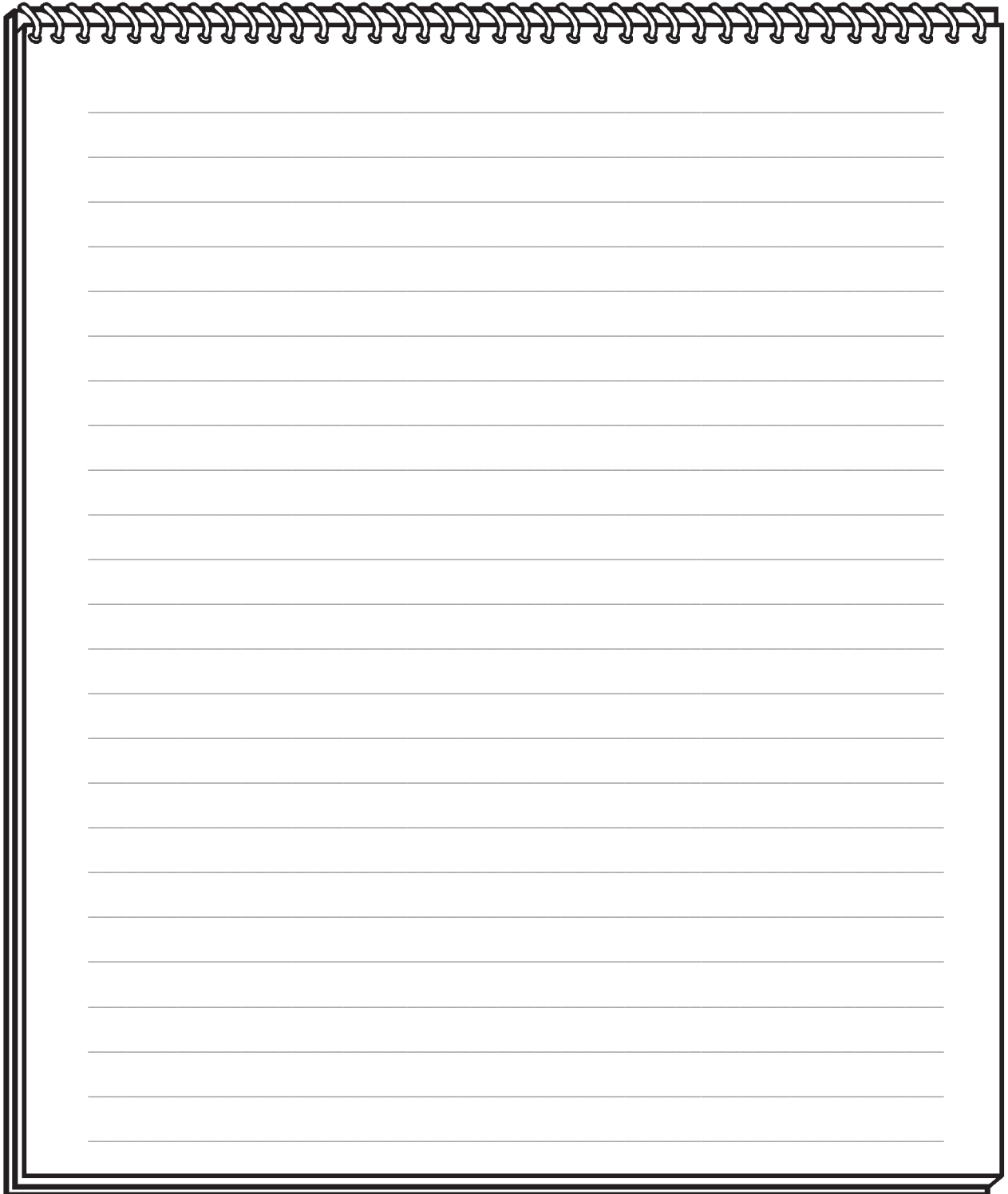
A. Read the excerpt from the poem. Notice that even the slightest actions are told in chronological order. Now *you* follow Longfellow’s example as you write about a historical event. Use one of the examples below, or choose some other event that interests you. Make sure you retell the story in sequence—first things first, followed by the rest. Before you begin, make some notes on the event you will cover.

- the landing of the *Mayflower*
- pioneers embark on the Oregon Trail
- Edison’s invention of the light bulb
- the first Model-T Ford takes to the road

Historical event: _____

1. Who was there? _____
2. When did it happen? _____
3. What are some details of that time in history?
 - How did people dress? _____
 - _____
 - What kinds of transportation were available then? _____
 - _____
 - How did people communicate over long distances? _____
 - _____
4. What happened first? _____
5. What happened next? _____
6. What was the outcome? _____
- _____

- B.** Now, using your notes from Part A as a guide, retell a story from history. You may write your story in prose or in poetry. When you are finished, double-check the sequence of events to make sure you've followed chronological order. In addition, check for completeness. Have you left out anything important? If so, add it and write a revised version.

A large spiral-bound notebook with lined pages for writing. The notebook is oriented vertically and has a silver spiral binding at the top. The pages are white with horizontal ruling lines. The notebook is shown from a slightly elevated perspective, with the top and right edges visible.