



Teacher-Friendly Scoring Guide for Narrative Writing

Narrative writing captures a real or imagined experience. It usually contains three primary elements: characters, setting, and plot. The writer grabs and holds the reader's attention by developing believable characters and putting them in interesting situations, establishing a clear sense of time and place, weaving in vivid details and plot twists, and creating a central conflict or problem that is resolved in a compelling way. To accomplish that, the writer must apply the key qualities of the mode with skill and confidence.

6 EXCEPTIONAL

- A. **Plot:** The writer moves the story forward with fresh, original, and logically sequenced events. There is a compelling conflict or problem that is solved thoughtfully and credibly. The writer intrigues, delights, surprises, entertains, and/or informs the reader.
- B. **Characters:** The writer creates believable real or imagined characters who are fresh and original. The writer provides direct evidence throughout the piece of how the characters grow, change, and learn.
- C. **Setting:** The writer makes time and place work in harmony. He or she creates a visual setting for the reader by establishing the mood or atmosphere using unique and rich details.

5 STRONG

4 REFINING

- A. **Plot:** The writer mingles significant events with trivial ones, and sometimes strays from the main story line, distracting the reader from the major conflict or problem and its solution.
- B. **Characters:** The writer uses predictable and ordinary details and anecdotes that don't bring the characters to life in a memorable way. There is little attention to how their thinking changes or grows.
- C. **Setting:** The writer describes time and place but without much imagination or clarity. The details do not stand out as original.

3 DEVELOPING

2 EMERGING

- A. **Plot:** The writer offers simple, incomplete events that don't relate to one another and/or add up to much. The writer creates no clear conflict or problem to be solved.
- B. **Characters:** The writer creates characters that don't feel real or possible; they are stereotypes or cardboard cutouts. The writer has not developed the characters.
- C. **Setting:** The writer does not clearly describe the setting or completely omits it.

1 RUDIMENTARY