



MY Access! Instructional Unit

Upper Elementary Narrative

Prompt: A Trunk in the Attic

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Prompt

A Trunk in the Attic

Imagine that you found an old trunk in your grandparent's attic. What would you like to find in the trunk? Explain the reasons for your choices. As you write your story, remember to describe what you found and give details to explain your discovery

As you write your story, think about these questions:

- did you write a story about the assigned topic?
- did you use details to describe the characters, places, and events?
- did you organize your essay clearly with an introduction, body, and conclusion?
- did you use a variety of words and well-written sentences?
- did you use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

MY Access! “Trunk in the Attic” Prewriting Visualization Activity

- Have students take out a piece of paper and pencil before asking them to close their eyes while you read the following visualization (you may even want to quietly play classical music):

Imagine an old trunk that has been stored in your grandparents' attic for at least fifty years. How might this trunk look? (have students offer ideas)

It's now time to open the trunk. But first, you notice that it is coated in a thick layer of dust. Looking around, you grab an old jacket that must have been hanging in the attic forever, and you use it to wipe—sneezing as a puff of dust momentarily clouds the room. Now that the trunk is a little cleaner, you notice a once-gold latch that secures the trunk shut. Leaning in for a closer look, your heart speeds up as you realize it doesn't have a lock on it. Should you open this trunk? It doesn't belong to you, but you are suddenly curious—as curious as you've ever been—about what hides inside. You try to lift the latch, but age has frozen it shut. You look around quickly; maybe you shouldn't open this trunk. Maybe you should just go away and pretend you never found it. But you don't stand up and you don't walk down the stairs. Instead, you find yourself touching the latch again—this time applying more force. It starts to give and then suddenly it flies open...all you have to do now is lift up the lid. You take a deep breath. Standing up so you have more strength, you slowly, slowly raise up the lid. Your eyes widen...you can't believe what you are seeing.

- Have students open their eyes. On their paper, give them 3-5 minutes to make a list of what they imagine is in the trunk.

- Have students share their ideas with a small group. Tell them to prepare to share their top 3-5 ideas with the whole class. They also must be prepared to explain WHY these items were important discoveries.
- On the board, list the top ideas and discuss (you may want to draw a large trunk that you can write the ideas in).
- Students are now ready to begin their stories. They can choose one of the ideas on the board or one of their own.

Prewriting: Generating Ideas for a "Trunk in the Attic"

1. Think about the following and jot down your notes in your NOTEPAD or on a piece of paper.

- What is exciting about the trunk discovered in the attic? Who discovers it? Where is it? How old is it? What does it look like? What's in it? Do the contents of the trunk have any meaning to you or anyone else? What will happen to the trunk now?
- Optional: Draw the trunk and the surroundings

2. Now that you have figured out the heart of your story, let's get started.

How will you begin your story?

- Will you start with a detailed description of your surroundings about the time you found the trunk or earlier?
- Or with dialogue between you and another person in your story?
- Or with a startling episode that explodes how you found the trunk at the very beginning?

3. Describe the setting of your story.

- Make sure that you include a great deal of description so that your reader can see the surroundings where you found the trunk. The more details they can "see" the more they will feel like they are experiencing this moment with you.
- Remember, "show" don't "tell."

4. How many characters will you include in your story?

- Make sure that you include enough information about how you and your characters look, think, **feel** and behave to make you and others come alive to your readers. This should include descriptions as well as **dialogue**.
- Remember, "show" don't "tell."

5. What happened during the time you or someone else found the trunk?

- Tell your reader about your experiences and the experiences of others. It is important to talk about your feelings and your characters' feelings.

- ❑ Remember, “show” don’t “tell.”

6. How will you end your story?

- ❑ Think about how you want your reader to feel you at the end of the story. Surprised? Relieved? Sad? Thrilled? Disappointed? Proud? Make sure that you lead up to that feeling well in advance.
- ❑ The last thing you or one of your characters says or does will leave a lasting impression on the reader. Think about what you want that lasting impression to be and describe it.

Narrative Texts

Characteristics of a Narrative:

- Narrates (tells) a sequence of events and scenes with sensory details
- Develops plot and character
- Has rising action and conflict that leads to a climax
- Can be in 1st or 3rd person point-of-view

Purpose of a Narrative:

- To entertain and relate an event within a time sequence
- Can (but not always) share personal reflections or express thoughts and feelings

Types of Narrative:

- Novels
- Short stories
- First person autobiographical incident
- Personal memoir or essay
- Myths, legends, folk tales, fairy tales, tall tales
- Epic poems

Features of a Narrative:

- **Setting:** Where and when the story takes place
- **Characters:** Described in detail so reader knows not only what they look like, but also what they think, say, feel, etc.
- **Plot:** What happens—the sequence of events. Strong plots have the following elements:
 - **Conflict:** moments that create suspense or anticipation for the reader. Conflict doesn’t always have to be dramatic or scary (even happy stories have conflict).
 - **Climax:** The turning point of the story—the point where the greatest emotional involvement for the reader takes place.
 - **Resolution:** The final outcome of the story. It doesn’t have to be happy, but it should give the reader some sense of closure.

Teaching the Elements of a Narrative

1. Distribute the following materials to your students:
 - One or more professional or student narrative texts
 - A hard copy of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*
 - A marker, crayon or highlighter
2. Place students in groups of four. Give each student in the group a different colored marker/highlighter and assign each student an “expert” role.
 - Student 1 will read the text and highlight only the **setting**.
 - Student 2 will read the text and highlight details about the **characters**—physical descriptions as well as anything they do, say, or think.
 - Student 3 will read the text and highlight only the **conflicts** they see in the story.
 - Student 4 will read the text and highlight the **climax** and the **resolution**.
3. Read the story as a whole class. Each student is to highlight his or her “expert” area as you read. After, discuss the various elements and how/why they worked. For example, why were the character descriptions important? What did you see the characters doing? What did the setting add to the story? How did the author make the climax exciting?

An Extension of This Activity

This activity can also be used as a form of peer response. This time, however, students in the group will bring their own narratives. They will read the first narrative, and each student will highlight his or her area of expertise. Then, have students pass to the right and read the second narrative doing the same thing. They should also write any questions they have in the appropriate section of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*. When students get their own narrative back, have them check to make sure they have all colors highlighted. If not, time to revise!

Narrative Topic Outline

Setting: Where and when does your story take place? Describe your locations in detail.

Characters: Who is in your story? Describe these people in detail. For example, what do they look like? What do they say that is important (dialogue)? What are they feeling?

Plot: What happens in your story? Create pictures for your reader to see, hear, and feel by using a great amount of detail in every scene you describe. **Show**, don't tell.

Conflict: A good story has to create suspense, anticipation, or a sense of wonder for your reader; otherwise, why would your reader keep reading? Even if your story is about a happy time in your life, remember to include something that will arouse your readers' emotions and make them excited about what will happen. Show your reaction to the conflict.

Climax: What is the turning point of your story—the point where you have your readers' greatest interest and greatest emotional involvement in your story?

Resolution: What is the final outcome of your story?

Introducing your story: How will you begin your story so that your readers will get really excited about reading on?

The following are some suggestions.

Dialogue—“It’s perfectly clear why she wants it,” said Marge, as she cut through the store, making sure she would beat out Jessica.

A flashback—Erin was a hundred yards from the finish line and knew she shouldn’t look back. The problem was that she couldn’t help herself.

A startling statement—My town of Newbridge was a village of fools, fools young and old.

A puzzling statement—Across the street lived old Johnson, blind as a bat, but kept my house safe from the zombies who visited every night.

A description of your main character and your setting—Erica pulled back her hair and put on her glasses. Now that she was running for class president, she wanted to look the part.

Putting your story in order: How will you tell your story? Will you start from the beginning and describe each scene until you get to the end? Or will you start at the end of your story to create interest and then after the first paragraph begin at the beginning?

Most importantly, make an outline of what happens in each scene of your story in the order that it happened before you begin writing. Then follow the sequence of events when you write your story. Otherwise, you can confuse your reader about what is happening.

Words and phrases that can substitute (synonyms) for “then”

All of a sudden,	Suddenly,	At that moment,
Just then,	Meanwhile,	All at once,
In a few hours,	The next day,	After that,
At that time,	Afterward,	Without warning,
Unfortunately,	Surprisingly,	Next,
Amazingly,	To my surprise,	Unexpectedly,
At that point,	In the meantime,	For the time being,
Later,	After that,	Sadly,

MY Access! 6-Point Narrative Writing Rubric

	Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
	The extent to which the response establishes and maintains a controlling idea (or central idea), an understanding of purpose and audience, and completion of the task.	The extent to which the response develops ideas fully and creatively using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details (<i>plot, setting, characters, conflict, dialogue</i>).	The extent to which the response demonstrates a unified structure, direction, and unity, paragraphing and transitional devices.	The extent to which response demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice and usage.	The extent the response demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6	Very effective Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates a <i>thorough</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	Very Effective Content & Development. Provides a <i>thoroughly</i> detailed and developed plot and setting. Creates complex characters. Clearly establishes tension/conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used very effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	Very Effective Organization. Captures the reader's attention by cleverly opening the story. Story flows very smoothly because of excellent transitions that support sequential development. Has a conclusion that pulls the entire story together.	Very Effective Language Use and Style. Demonstrates <i>precise</i> language and word choice, a <i>defined</i> voice, and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured and varied</i> sentences.	Very Effective control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Few or no</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling.
5	Good Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	Good Content & Development. Provides a <i>well-developed</i> plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/ conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	Good Organization. Opening of story excites readers' to continue reading. Story flows smoothly from one event to another with effective transitions that support sequential development. Conclusion provides reader with a sense of completeness.	Good Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with <i>some evidence</i> of voice and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured</i> sentences with <i>some variety</i> .	Good control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Few errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not interfere with the message</i> .
4	Adequate Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates a <i>basic</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are relevant to the story.	Adequate Content & Development. Provides a <i>reasonably</i> developed plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/ conflict/problem that holds the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	Adequate Organization. Provides an interesting opening to the story that keeps the reader reading. Story generally flows smoothly from one event to another with transitions to support sequential development.	Adequate Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with an <i>awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; generally uses correct sentence structure with <i>some variety</i> .	Adequate control of Conventions & Mechanics. Some errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
3	Limited Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates a <i>limited</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may not be relevant to the story.	Limited Content & Development. Provides an <i>adequately</i> developed plot, setting and characters, but lacks sufficient detail to make this more than a summary of what happens in the story. Tension/ conflict or a problem may be stated, but not developed. Some dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	Limited Organization. Provides an adequate opening that may not hold the reader's attention. The flow of the story may be broken by haps in time and sequence. Transitions may be weak. Provides the reader with some sense of closure.	Limited Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>simple</i> language and word choice, <i>some awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; relies on <i>simple</i> sentences with <i>insufficient</i> sentence variety and word choice.	Limited control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Several noticeable</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that may <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
2	Minimal Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates a <i>minimal</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may stray from the point of the story.	Minimal Content & Development. Provides a <i>minimally</i> developed plot and setting. Characters are only described rather than developed. Narrative may include details or information that detracts from the story. Lacks tension or conflict to make the story interesting. Little dialogue is used to reveal characters' thoughts.	Minimal Organization. Provides an opening that may repeat the title of the prompt. Flow of story may be difficult to follow because of gaps in time and sequence. Demonstrates little evidence of a conclusion.	Minimal Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>poor</i> language and word choice, with <i>little awareness</i> of audience; makes <i>basic errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	Minimal control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Patterns of errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>substantially interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
1	Inadequate or no Focus & Meaning. Demonstrates <i>almost no</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides very little detail, some of which may not be relevant to the story.	Inadequate or no Content & Development. <i>Lacks</i> an identifiable plot and setting. Characters are introduced but not developed. Lack of tension or conflict makes the story uninteresting to follow. Not much happens.	Inadequate or no Organization. May have an opening that does no more than repeats the title of the prompt. Story lacks basic organization (beginning, middle and end) with serious gaps in sequencing of brief ideas.	Inadequate Language Use & Style. Demonstrates <i>unclear or incoherent</i> language and word choice, <i>no</i> awareness of audience, and <i>major errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	Inadequate or no control of Conventions & Mechanics. <i>Errors so severe</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that they <i>significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.

MY Access! Writing Domains

Type of Writing: _____

Your writing will be evaluated on the basis of five domains or trains of writing. Study each domain on the rubric and USE BULLET POINTS to take notes so that you can define each one. The feedback you receive will use the language on this chart.

Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piece is paragraphed• Grammar errors do not interfere with the message• Uses proper punctuation• Excellent spelling

Directions: Read Sara's story. Based on our discussion centered on the elements of a strong narrative, is this a strong story? Pay close attention to setting, character development, conflict, climax and resolution.

A Trunk in the Attic

"OK mother! I'll get the magazines, I yelled. I ran upstairs. When I got to my bedroom, all of a sudden I heard a crash from the attic. I slowly walked up the creaky old stairs. I got a metal stick that I saw next to the attic door. I opened the door slowly. I was about to swing the stick but I stopped immediately. I noticed that it was my brother, Rick ,that was in the attic. He said that he was getting something for our pet, Rosy. He quickly got the pet food he needed and ran out.

Since I never got to look in the attic, I looked around. I heard another crash but louder this time. I got the stick ready. I saw something glowing, glowing. I went even closer. I saw a trunk that was red and a golden lock. It was moving all over the place. I looked around to see if there was a key.

I spotted something that was sticking to a web. I thought it was a piece of wood. But when I looked closer, it was a key! I took the key and opened the trunk. Inside was candy, jewelry, coins and some antiques. I showed my family and friends and played with the treasure and ate the candy.

Comment Box:

Score Overview and MY Tutor Feedback

Focus & Meaning

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to **this assignment was rated a 3 for focus**. Focus relates to your ability to present a consistent, unified message and stay on topic.

Your focus is adequate. Typically, a response at this level gives a fairly clear statement of purpose and wanders only slightly from the topic.

Sara, now that you are ready to revise, try some of these ideas to help improve focus and meaning in your writing.

Revision Goal 1: Understand the purpose, audience, and task.

1. Read the prompt. Find the topic, purpose, and audience. Write them on your focus checklist or on a blank sheet of paper.
2. Read your own writing and think:
 - What is the main event in my story? The topic of YOUR story should be the SAME as the topic of the prompt.
 - Why did I write my story? Am I writing to describe, to inform, to persuade? The purpose of YOUR story should be the SAME as the purpose in the prompt.
 - To whom am I writing? The audience to whom YOU are writing should be the SAME as the audience in the prompt.

Example:

Topic: Write about [a special day in your life](#).

I wrote about the day I was in the talent show because that was a special day for me.

Purpose: [Describe the day](#).

I used many details to describe the talent show.

Audience: Write a story for your [friends and family](#).

I included important details that I think will be interesting to my family and friends like how I felt before the talent show, what I did for my talent, how well I performed, and how I felt afterwards.

Revision Goal 2: Narrow your focus.

1. Highlight the main event in yellow.
2. Underline events and details that are NOT about the main event.
3. Move or remove the events and details that are NOT about the main event.

Example:

Before Revision: **I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show.** [Jake and I watched a scary movie that night.](#)

Frank's Strategy: *The topic of my story is the talent show; watching a scary movie is not. I need to delete details that are not related to the main event.*

After Revision: I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show.

Frank's Reflection: *I removed "Jake and I watched a scary movie that night" because it has nothing to do with the main event, the talent show.*

Revision Goal 3: Use details to support the purpose of the story.

1. Highlight, in green, details about the main event.
2. Add key details about the main event: Where did the event take place? What did the scene look like? How did people act?

Example:

Before Revision: The school auditorium was **packed for the show**.

Frank's Goal: *I need to add more important information and details about the talent show, such as: Where did it take place? What did it look like? What happened?*

After Revision: The decorated school auditorium was packed with parents and students standing shoulder to shoulder.

Frank's Strategy: *I added colorful details about the auditorium, the place where the main event took place.*

Content & Development

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for content and development**. Development relates to your ability to provide content that supports your main idea or controlling point and your ability to provide supporting details, examples and/or evidence.

Your development is limited. Typically, a response at this level shows support of ideas presented with some use of examples, evidence or other supporting details.

Sara, let's add more detail to your story!

Revision Goal 1: Create a detailed setting.

1. Highlight, in green, the words that tell when and where your story took place. Now, add more specific details about where your story took place and when it happened. For example, you can describe the place, the weather, the time of day or year, or the season.
2. Now use your five senses to describe your setting. How does the setting look, feel, smell, or sound? Use your five senses to add more details to your setting.

Example:

Before Revision: On **Halloween**, we got ready in my **house**.

Annie's Strategy: *I need to add more specific details about where and when my characters are getting ready. I also need to describe how the setting smells, looks, feels, and sounds.*

After Revision: On a crisp, fall Halloween night, we put on our costumes in my big, dark, cold kitchen.

Annie's Reflection: *I replaced "house" with "in my kitchen" and added "crisp, fall" and "night" to "Halloween" to make the setting more specific. I also added "big, dark, cold" to describe how the kitchen looked and felt.*

Revision Goal 2: Create realistic characters.

1. Underline the people in your story. Give them names if they do not have them.
2. Highlight, in green, details about your characters. Add more details to help your reader “see” and “hear” your characters: How do they look, sound, and act?

Example:

Before Revision: On Halloween night, my little brother and I got ready in our kitchen.

Annie’s Strategy: *I want to add specific details about my characters. What is the little brother’s name? I need to describe the little brother. How does he act?*

After Revision: On Halloween night, my annoying little brother Mikey and I put on our ghost costumes in our big kitchen. Since we were young, Mikey has always copied everything I do. So, this Halloween, we were both dressing up as ghosts.

Annie’s Reflection: *I named the little brother, “Mikey,” and added “annoying” to describe him. I also gave more details about what the main character and Mikey were doing on Halloween night.*

3. Dialogue (what your characters say) makes your characters seem more real. Find a place in your story where your characters could talk or think out loud. Add dialogue to show what your characters would say to themselves or to each other.

Example:

Before Revision: My annoying little brother, Mikey, wanted to be a ghost for Halloween just because I was going to dress up as one. Because he is younger than I am, our mom said that he could.

Annie’s Strategy: *I want to include dialogue to make my characters seem more life-like. What would my characters say? How would they say it?*

After Revision: My annoying little brother, Mikey, wanted to be a ghost for Halloween just because I was going to dress up as one. When I said I was dressing up as a ghost, Mikey whined, “I want to be a ghost, too!”

“NO! I said I wanted to be a ghost first!” I cried.

“Let your little brother be a ghost too,” my mom said.

So, this Halloween, we were both dressing up as ghosts.

Annie’s Reflection: *I added dialogue to make Mikey and his older brother seem more real and to help the reader know the characters better.*

Revision Goal 3: Build a well-developed plot.

1. Highlight the main event (what you most want your reader to know about) in yellow. Add important information about what happened during the event. For example, you can describe how the characters feel, how they act, and what they say.

Example:

Before Revision: On Halloween, my little brother and I put on our ghost costumes in our big kitchen. Once we were dressed in our ghost costumes, it was time for trick-or-treating. I was excited to go trick-or-treating.

Annie’s Strategy: *I want to find my main event and add important information to describe it. What is important or interesting about the main event?*

After Revision: Once we were dressed in our ghost costumes, it was time for trick-or-treating. I was still excited to go trick-or-treating, even though Mikey and I had the same costume. Nothing would make me less excited to get candy!

Annie's Reflection: *I added more details about how the older brother felt and why he felt that way. The reader needs to know this information in order to understand why the main event is important.*

2. Highlight, in green, details about the main event. Highlight your verbs (the action) in red. Add details and strong verbs to make the main event come to life! Use the word bank to help you.

Example:

Before Revision: Mikey and I **got** our bags for the candy and **ran** outside. It **was** almost dark, and there were a lot of people in costumes trick-or-treating already.

Annie's Strategy: *I want to use sensory details to help the reader picture the setting. I can add strong verbs to make the action exciting.*

After Revision: Mikey and I grabbed our bags for the candy and raced outside. The sun was setting, and it was getting darker and spookier. The street was already filled with witches, pirates, and monsters who were already trick-or-treating.

Annie's Reflection: *I replaced weak verbs like "got," and "ran" with strong, exciting words like "grabbed" and "raced." I added more specific and colorful details about the main event; for example, the sights he saw on the street during Halloween.*

Organization

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 2 for organization**. Organization relates to your ability to present your ideas in a logical and ordered fashion.

Your organization is limited. Typically, a response at this level shows an appropriate organizational structure (beginning, middle and end), but is missing or lacks transitions and is not unified and consistent throughout.

Sara, now that you have some ideas, let's work on putting them in order. Let's work on organization!

Revision Goal 1: Put your events in order.

1. Number each event in your story.
2. In the beginning, did you tell what took place first? In the middle, did you tell what took place next? At the end, did you tell what took place last? Make sure nothing is out of order.

Example:

Before Revision: (1) First, Sarah got out of bed. (2) Then, she ate cereal. (3) She ran out the door. (4) She heard her bus coming down the street.

Oscar's Strategy: *I need to put my events in the correct order. Sarah heard her bus coming down the street before she ran out the door.*

After Revision: First, Sarah got out of bed. Then, she ate some cereal. She heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

Oscar's Reflection: *I put the events in the correct order: Sarah got out of bed, ate some cereal, heard her bus coming down the street, and then ran out the door.*

Revision Goal 2: Use transitions to show your reader how events and ideas are connected.

1. Highlight, in orange, the transitions (words such as first, second, last, next, yesterday, today, in addition) in your story.

2. Add more transitions to show how your events go together. Use the word bank to help you!

Example:

Before Revision: First, Sarah got out of bed. Then, she ate some cereal. She heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

Oscar's Strategy: *I need to add transitional words or phrases to help my reader follow the events in my story.*

After Revision: First, Sarah got out of bed. Then she ate some cereal. A few minutes later, she heard her bus coming down the street. She ran out the door.

Oscar's Reflection: I added the transitional phrase, "A few minutes later" to show when the events took place and to make the sequence of events flow together.

Language Use & Style

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response to this assignment **was rated a 3 for language use and style**. Language use relates to the decisions you make as a writer to create "**style**" in your writing. Style is created through sentence variety, word choice and usage.

Your language use and style is adequate. Typically, a response at this level is readable, but shows errors in sentence structure, usage and word choice.

Sara, let's work on your style and language use. Try some of these ideas to make your story more interesting!

Revision Goal 1: Choose words carefully.

1. Underline the nouns (people, places, and things) in your story. Use specific words to tell how people, places, and things look, sound, feel, or smell.

Example:

Before Revision: Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, marshmallows, and cookies.

Larry's Strategy: *I need to add sensory details to describe the things in my story.*

After Revision: Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, fluffy marshmallows, and chocolate chip cookies.

Larry's Reflection: *I added "fluffy" to describe the marshmallows and "chocolate chip" to describe the cookies. Specific details will help my reader picture my story.*

2. Highlight your verbs in red. Use strong verbs (for example, run, walk, scream, cook, bolt, jump). Tell when and how people and things act: Did they act now, yesterday, this afternoon? Did they act slowly, loudly, quickly? Use the word bank to help you.

Example:

Before Revision: The boy **put on** his gray wool coat **to walk** to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he **looked** at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

Larry's Strategy: *I need to replace weak action words with strong action words. I also need to add details about when and how characters acted.*

After Revision: The boy slipped into his gray wool coat to walk quickly to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he stared at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

Larry's Reflection: *I replaced my weaker action words, "put on" and "looked," with stronger, specific action words "slid into" and "stared." I also added an adverbs (-ly word), "quickly," to describe how the boy walked.*

Revision Goal 2: Write short and long sentences.

1. Highlight short sentences in pink. Highlight, in purple, long sentences that include more than one idea. Be sure to use both long and short sentences.
2. Combine short sentences with conjunctions, such as "and," "but," and "or."

Example:

Before Revision: He paid for the food. Then he walked home.

Larry's Strategy: *I need to combine ideas in short sentences using connecting words like "and" or "but."*

After Revision: He paid for the food and walked home.

Larry's Reflection: I connected two sentences by replacing "then he" with the conjunction "and."

Revision Goal 3: Make the beginnings of your sentences more interesting.

1. Underline the first three words in each sentence. Do all of your sentences start the same way?
2. If sentences begin the same way, add details such as *when* or *where* something happened to change how some of your sentences begin.

Example:

Before Revision: He paid for the food and walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

Larry's Strategy: *Variety is the key to interesting writing. I need to change the beginnings of sentences that sound the same.*

After Revision: After he paid for the food, he walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

Larry's Reflection: *I added the transition word "after" to tell when the action took place and to change the beginning of my first sentence.*

Mechanics & Conventions

Sara, on a scale of one to six, your response **was rated a 3 for mechanics**. Mechanics has to do with your ability to apply the rules of standard American English, including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Your use of mechanics is satisfactory. A response at this level contains few errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

Sara, the better the mechanics, the easier it will be for the reader to enjoy and understand your writing.

Revision Goal 1: Eliminate errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

1. Read your writing. You may want to read out loud (to yourself) so that you can hear many of your mistakes and correct them.
2. Correct any spelling errors using the spell checker. Then, make your reader SMILE by doing the following:

Sentences: Make sure each sentence has a subject and an action.

Before Revision: My house on Halloween.

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that this sentence does not have an action. I need to add a verb to make this fragment a sentence.*

After Revision: We put on our costumes in my house on Halloween night.

Marcy's Reflection: *I added a verb to make the sentence fragment a complete sentence.*

Marks: End each sentence with a punctuation mark.

Before Revision: My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen how funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him what was my mom thinking when she bought it

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that this paragraph does not have any punctuation. I need to put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence to make my writing clearer.*

After Revision: My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen. How funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him! What was my mom thinking when she bought it?

Marcy's Reflection: *I put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence. If the sentence was exciting, I added an exclamation point. If the sentence was a question, I added a question mark.*

Indents: Indent when you begin a new paragraph.

Before Revision:

As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.

Marcy's Strategy: *I noticed that I did not indent the beginning of this paragraph. I need to indent each paragraph.*

After Revision:

 As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.

Marcy's Reflection: *I indented the beginning of the paragraph.*

Letters: Start each sentence with a **capital letter**.

Before Revision: it was Halloween night. my brother and i got ready in the kitchen.

Marcy's Strategy: *These sentences do not begin with capital letters. I need to capitalize the words at the beginning of sentences.*

After Revision: It was Halloween night. My brother and I got ready in the kitchen.

Marcy's Reflection: I changed all of the lowercase letters in the beginning of sentences to capital letters. I need to remember that I always have to capitalize the pronoun, "I."

Editor: Click on MY Editor for more ways to improve your writing.

REVISION PLAN (sample)

Name: Sara
Class: Narrative Writing
Prompt: Trunk in the Attic

My Goals:

Focus and Meaning:

I must focus more on what was IN the trunk. I only spent one sentence on it.

Content and Development:

I will write about what was in the trunk and why it is important to me. I will explain why these treasures made my day great.

Writing Strategy:

Focus and Meaning:

The beginning of my story is strong, but when I actually get to the part about what is in the trunk I will spend more time describing what I see and why I'm excited about it.

Content and Development:

In my revised story, I will keep the beginning the same, but when I actually open the trunk I will describe what is in it. I think I need to pick something more important to focus on. I will describe how the items in the trunk were great because they allowed my friends and me to have a wonderful time together.

Reflection:

I started writing without planning. Next time I will outline my ideas and select the details before I start writing my story. I want to include more details about what is in the trunk and I want to show how my friends and I really enjoyed discovering these treasures.

Directions: Read the following stories. Based on the rubric, score each narrative. Pay close attention to setting, character development, conflict, climax and resolution.

Tatiana's story

A Trunk in the Attic

About a year ago, I was my house in Florida. I was in my room when I heard a noise in the attic. So I decided to go check it out. I climbed the staircase quickly, only to find that the noise was coming from my dog Buddy. He was scratching, trying to open a brown trunk. It had a lot of dust so I blew the dust off of it to read what was written across the front of the trunk. All that dust made me sneeze. Achoo! After I was finished sneezing, I looked closely at the writing which said 1963. Wow, that was a long time ago, now it is 2006. It had my great-grandmother's name and my mother's name on it. "It must be a gift!" I decided. I looked around the outside of the trunk and found a key hole. I also found a key taped to the back of the trunk. Unfortunately, the key was not the right shape to open the trunk. I needed a key that was shaped like a flower. This key was just an ordinary old key.

I looked at my dog buddy and decided I was going to need his help on this one. "Go find the key," I said to Buddy. He began sniffing around right away. I looked through some boxes that were near the trunk. Suddenly, I heard Buddy begin to bark loudly. He was very excited about something. I ran to him quickly to see what he had found. He was in the closet standing over a bag which was filled with keys. "Good boy!" I yelled. There were many keys in that bag. I'll never find the right one, I thought to myself. I began to feel hopeless. Just as I was about to give up, there it was. A beautiful, shiny, flower shaped key. There was only one thing left to do. I ran over to the trunk and stuck the key in the hole. At first, nothing happened. I realized that I had put the key in backwards. This time I got the key in the right way. When the trunk finally opened I found many things from my mother's childhood. There were pictures of all my family members, toys, figurines and an old dusty dress she had worn when she was a lot younger. There was a note that my great grandmother had written to my mother before she died. In with the note I found a picture of my mother with my great grandmother. It was the last picture that they had ever taken together. It made me realize how much my mother misses her grandmother. Seeing these things made me feel sad for her. Now I understood why she didn't like to talk about her too much.

As I closed the trunk and locked it back up, I couldn't help but think of how much I loved my grandmother. It made me want to call her and check in right away. So I fixed everything so it looked as though it did when I had found it and returned to my room. Ring! Ring! "Hello?"

"Hi, Grandma."

"Hello, Tatiana, I was just thinking about you."

"I was just thinking about you too Grandma, when do you think I can see you again."

"Why not today?"

"Sounds good to me!" I exclaimed. I was really happy that I was going to get to see my grandmother. Finding the trunk in the attic helped me realize how important it is to spend time with the people I love most.

Your Score: _____

Darrin's story

It was a frosty Saturday morning and I was laying flat on my back in my bed. "Saturday's are so useless" I said aloud. What was the use of a Saturday? I wished that today was a Friday, a day covered with excitement. My sister walked into the room frowning slightly. " Why aren't you doing anything?" she asked inquiringly. "There's nothing to do."I replied scathingly. She suggested that I take some boxes up to the attic." They're filled with junk we don't need, " she explained. I sprinted up the ancient and hollow stairs and pushed open the door. As soon as I stepped inside, a ghastly smell mixed with hot air met my face. Eyes watering, I dropped the boxes and felt around for the light switch. After a few minutes my hand came in contact with it but it seemed that electricity did not work in this room. To make matters worse, the door was now shut with a resonating bang. I felt around for the flashlight I had brought with me and took it out of my belt as though unsheathing a sword. I flicked it on. I sensed movement. I directed the flashlight at it. About ten bats screeched and flew away. I screamed and ducked. I saw a box that was black with dust. My vision along with my other five senses were clouded. I cleared it away and read,"My Memories" by Christine Ramdin. It belonged to my sister. I opened it and saw pictures and memoirs she had from her childhood. After admiring such achievements and having a few good laughs about events that occurred in her childhood, I pulled the box away and revealed a trunk. It was made of fine wood and was very ancient. I wished that I could at least get some help in this old closet.

Before I opened the trunk, I decided to play a game. I would guess what was inside before I opened it. I decided to give myself three guesses. My first guess was there was a pirate's treasure concealed in it. Maybe I was descended from pirates and they left the treasure in my attic. I guessed this because it was old and looked similar to the chests in pirate movies I had seen. It also had a gold gleam. If I found a treasure inside the trunk, I would be rich! The trunk also had a strange look on it that gave me the urge to throw it out the window.

My next guess was that there was some kind of family secret hidden there. Like something that has been hidden for centuries and never mentioned again. I thought it was like some kind of devil that was controlling people.

My final guess was that there was a zombie in there. (Okay, I admit that I used to think that they didn't exist, but now I do.) There was something about it that I didn't trust. Similar to the Harry Potter books, Harry feels that all the happiness was drained out of him when he comes near a dementor, I feel the same way about the trunk. When the flashlights beam hit the trunk, it shook up and down as though it concealed a fierce monster, fighting to get out. I staggered backward in a terrified silence. The flashlight went out. I'm sure that wasn't a coincidence. With that occurrence, the whole room was plunged into total darkness. Half of mine was burning with curiosity to know what was inside the trunk. The other half wanted to back away and never come back again.

My heart was pounding hard against my ribs. I felt sweat on my forehead. I forced myself to be courageous. My hand was shaking badly. I opened the trunk and let out an earsplitting scream that would never leave me.....

The next thing I knew, I was safely in bed, my grandparents saying I dozed off. The only thing I remember was a pair of glowing green eyes accompanied by a large figure coming out of the trunk and approaching me. The memory of that horrible scene will haunt me until my dying day!

Your Score: _____

Intellimetric Holistic Scores: Tatiana 4, Darrin 5

WRITER'S WORKSHOP: testing your writing on an audience

Assemble in groups of three (3)---a writer and two editors

Print 3 copies of your paper, one for you and one for each of your two editors

Goal: To strengthen your introduction, conflict and conclusion of your story

Helping your readers find meaning in your writing

Before reading your writing, let your readers know

1. what you wanted to accomplish in your introduction and conclusion of your story
2. what you wanted your readers to feel as a result of the conflict/suspense in your story

The Process

- Read your writing out loud...slowly. Your editors should not comment on your writing while you are reading aloud.
- Your editors should read your paper at least once more to themselves. During the second reading, they may mark up your paper with questions/comments that they will share with you verbally.
- During the time your editors are commenting on your paper, you are to take notes, NOT SPEAK.
- Once they are completely finished, you may ask your editors questions to further clarify their comments, as needed.

The Revision Plan, the Revision and the Reflection (3Rs)

- Write a revision plan that reflects the goals and strategies suggested by your peers.
- Revise your essay
- Highlight the changes and describe the reasons for those changes
- Write a reflection that describes your thinking throughout the writing process
- Reassemble with your group to share your revised draft and your reflection
- Submit the revised draft, revision plan with a reflection to your teacher for credit

Suggested comments:

You have an engaging introduction. I like the way...

Your introduction tells or informs rather than excites. Perhaps you can...

I like the way you used conflict to

Consider adding a scene in your story where.....

Consider adding more emotion to your characters so that readers can identify with what characters are feeling

Consider adding more dialogue so that your readers can hear the characters thinking.

Tell me what you mean by "....."

I would suggest that you(add, remove, rearrange, reword, rephrase, etc)

Consider concluding your story by leaving your reader with a strong impression of the main point or message you are expressing. You may even want to end with dialogue.

Questions to address in a “Reflection”

1. What thoughts did you have about your paper before the writers’ workshop?
2. What did you become aware of during the session?
3. What did you change? Why?
4. What did you keep the same? Why?
5. Which suggestions were most helpful? Least helpful?
6. What thoughts do you have about your revised draft?
7. What have you learned about yourself as a writer that you will take into consideration for your next focused writing?

Revision Plan (you can complete this in MY Access!)

My goals:

My strategy:

Reflection (complete after you revise your story)