# Narrative Paragraph Rubric #1

*Ten Steps to writing an Awesome   
Personal Narrative Paragraph*

**STEPS OF THE RUBRIC:** Read each section carefully and try to follow all of the steps of the rubric. Read each section out loud or use text to speech and proofread carefully. A narrative should “sound” just like you would speak. Except better.

**1. ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION**

* + As Mae West said, “It is better to look marvelous than to feel marvelous.”
  + In that spirit, create assignments that “look” good.
  + In the top right corner of your assignment post your name, class, section, assignment name and date.

Name

Assignment Name

Class Section  
Date

**2. THE MAJOR THEME:**

Writing out your theme as a single word or short phrase is a good way to help keep focused as you write the paragraph.Put your one word or short phrase theme centered on the page. It should constantly remind you that THIS is the theme you have to stay focused on throughout your paragraph!

**[Put your theme here]**

**3. GUIDING QUOTE:**

If you are only writing a single paragraph, I think it is a great idea to put a quote above the paragraph that captures the mood, tone, and theme of your paragraph.

[*Put your quote here]*

**3. BROAD THEME:**

Write a short declarative statement that touches on a broad theme that all of us can relate to in some way or other.  This acts as a "hook" that will attract your reader's attention. Despite what you might wish, no one really cares about you when they read; a reader cares primarily about himself or herself. This broad theme is a theme that almost any person can relate to on some level, and hopefully it is intriguing enough to make your reader want to read on.

[Put your text here]

**4. NARROW THEME:**

Narrow down your theme by writing a phrase or sentence using the theme word that captures how your chosen theme is used in a specific way in the experience you are going to write about. Make sure it is "clear, concise and memorable" because this is what you want your readers to remember "as" they read your paragraph. This is the sentence that "steers" your reader in the direction you want your paragraph to go, and in that sense, it is what your paragraph is going to be about. YOU should be in this sentence; otherwise a reader may be misled into thinking you are merely writing about the importance of the theme, not about an experience you have had.

[Put your text here]

**5. ONE/TWO PUNCH:**

Follow your topic sentence with one or two more sentences that add detail or explanation to your topic sentence. These sentences can (and maybe should) be longer sentences. This helps to “narrow down” the focus of your paragraph so that you only have to write what can be fully explained in one paragraph.

[Put your text here]

***7. SET UP:***

The setup is the lead-in to your smoking gun. It prepares your reader for the description of your experience in the smoking gun by giving context to the experience.

* + **Who** is there?
  + **What** is happening?
  + **When** is it happening?
  + **Where** is it happening?
  + **Why** is it happening?

[Put your text here]

**8. SMOKING GUN:**

When writing about a personal experience, chose a specific personal experience (or even a smaller part of an experience) that explicates, illustrates, and amplifies the theme of your paragraph.

* + This personal experience is proof that you have been there and done that, which is why we call it the smoking gun! It is evidence that you are the one who had the experience that only YOU can write about with full authority.
  + When you write the smoking gun, be sure to include as much detail as needed—including specific imagery and actions, dialogue and anything else that helps you tell your story in a memorable and compelling way
  + Stick to ONE experience. If you want to include more experiences, write more paragraphs.

[Put your text here]

**9. HEAD & HEART:**

Show your reader your thoughts! Write as many more sentences as you "need" (but at least three more) to illustrate and elaborate upon whatever you introduced in your theme-setting sentences. This is where you *reflect* upon your experience and describe the ways that your experience reflects your broad and barrow theme.

[Put your text here]

**10. GET OUT or GO ON!**

This sentence either wants to close out your thoughts or "transition" to a potential new paragraph.

[Put your text here]

Cut and paste your complete paragraph here

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**THE RULE OF THREE:**

* A writing piece is never finished. It is abandoned. Once you are this far, now is the time to go back, edit, revise and to do whatever needs to be done to make this a worthy and enduring piece of literature in its own right.
* Find three areas or sentences that you can make better. If you can't or won't do this, then you are light years away from being a writer.
* **Often you can find a better broad or narrow theme sentence somewhere else in the paragraph**. You can almost always find a more clear and effective way to write a sentence than you wrote on your first try.
* Be sure to read the paragraph aloud, use text to speech to listen, consider making it into a podcast, share it on your blog, and/or post it to your portfolio because you are the writer now. This paragraph is your gift to the world.
* If the rule of three was too easy (meaning you easily found mistakes) do it again...and again if you have to.

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