



Level 5

If a student desires to get an “A,” we feel he should know just how to do so! Feel more than free to share the grading rubric with your student as a self-proofing guide.

Grading Personal Narratives

A student should always be required to do a self-evaluation before submitting his work. Prior to handing in his draft, have him complete a proofing sheet (just a checklist of those skills to which you think he can be held accountable). He can use the rubric in this document as his proofing sheet, or you can give him a bulleted list that includes more detail for sentence and paragraph proofing, if you so desire.

Personal Narrative Criteria

We suggest the following criteria as elements to be used in addition to more general requirements, such as those in “Grading Story Writing”:

- * The student’s topic is well-chosen and focused (on what happened when he went skiing, for instance, not on his entire trip to the Rockies).
- * The plot is well-developed around this one exciting moment. The beginning and ending appropriately frame this moment with the right amount of explanation on both sides of the climax. (Usually much more time and explanation occur before the climax than after.)
- * The narration maintains interest by using concrete words and carefully chosen details. The story flows smoothly, carrying the reader through the events of the story with good transitions.

Grading the Narrative

- * “A” papers will have all of the above features almost completely correct.
- * “B” papers are graded down because of issues with one or two significant aspects. In a grading rubric, a “B” paper would have the majority of checks fall into the “Good” column.
- * “C” papers indicate some real issues, and these can be with any of the rows of the rubric where at least half of the check marks fall into the “Fair” column.
- * “D” work is seriously flawed for any number of reasons. There are usually at least two of three main elements missing structurally, or two of three body paragraphs are seriously flawed, or perhaps there simply is no introductory or concluding paragraph at all. Usually, paragraphing issues alone will not cause a paper to be graded this low. The paper will also have problems with neatness, lateness, grammar and punctuation, or content. In terms of the rubric, usually most of your check marks wind up in the “Fair” to “Poor” columns.
- * “F” work is failing. As with “D’s,” “F’s” are not usually given for failure in just one area, like paragraphing. Rather, it’s the result of a combination of failures that give the student an overall failing grade. In the rubric, almost all check marks would fall into the “Poor” column.

There are various point-to-grade schemes. Here’s the one that we recommend:
A+ 100-98 pts.
A 97-94 pts.
A- 93-90 pts.
B+ 89-88 pts.
B 87-84 pts.
B- 83-80 pts.
C+ 79-78 pts.
C 77-74 pts.
C- 73-70 pts.
D+ 69-68 pts.
D 67-64 pts.
D- 63-60 pts.
F below 60 pts.

Numerical Grades

To reach a grade, work down the chart, checking off elements as they appear on your student’s draft.

- * You will subtract points for every check mark that does not fall in the “Excellent” column. Below is a chart that shows you how many points to subtract for each checked bullet point in a particular box. We are calling these “lost points.”

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Structure	-6 per bullet	-5 per bullet	-3 per bullet	-0 per bullet
Content	-6 per bullet	-5 per bullet	-3 per bullet	-0 per bullet
Writing Style	-3 per bullet	-2 per bullet	-1 per bullet	-0 per bullet
Mechanics	-3 per bullet	-2 per bullet	-1 per bullet	-0 per bullet

If you alter the number of bullets checked in any row, the lost point system will not work correctly, but you may still reach a grade based on the descriptions under “Grading the Narrative.”

- * Add the total number of lost points and write the sum in the space at the bottom of the page. To obtain the final grade for the paper, subtract the total lost points from 200 and divide by 2.
- * Remember that grading is somewhat subjective. This rubric is meant merely to be a tool to help you evaluate your student’s work, so please adjust it if you need to.



Personal Narrative

Name _____ Date ___/___/___ Grade: _____

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Structure (Only check 4 total bullets in this row.) Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> No clear climax. <input type="checkbox"/> Poor or no plotting; the story is a series of unrelated or jumbled events. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative details not arranged logically in paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Did not follow assignment properly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Climax not well narrated or emphasized. <input type="checkbox"/> Plot is not well-structured; many elements do not relate to the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Several key narrative details are not arranged logically. <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow assignment well.	<input type="checkbox"/> Climax could be clearer or better emphasized. <input type="checkbox"/> Plot is structured, but includes some unnecessary elements. <input type="checkbox"/> A few narrative details are missing or out of place. <input type="checkbox"/> Some variance from assignment instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear focus/climax. <input type="checkbox"/> Plot is well-structured and interesting. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative details are arranged in clear and logical fashion under strong topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Executed assignment exactly as directed.
Content (Only check 4 total bullets in this row.) Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis is insupportable or wrong. <input type="checkbox"/> Very few details are presented; they are very weakly portrayed. <input type="checkbox"/> No vivid narration; hard or impossible to follow. <input type="checkbox"/> No use of "show, don't tell"; characterization confuses the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/> Characterization is weak or inconsistent in places. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak on details; some are present, but not enough; details not clear or vivid. <input type="checkbox"/> Narration is often dull or confused. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak use of "show, don't tell."	<input type="checkbox"/> Good characterization, but not the best choice of supportive details. <input type="checkbox"/> Many good details, but some key details left out or faintly described. <input type="checkbox"/> Narration is adequate, but not outstanding. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses "show, don't tell" in places, but could use it more or better.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong characterization, amply supported by good details. <input type="checkbox"/> Many strong, specific, and interesting details support the narration. <input type="checkbox"/> Vivid, engaging, & easy-to-follow narration. <input type="checkbox"/> The student uses "show, don't tell" very well.
Writing Style (Only check 5 total bullets in this row.) Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are structurally inadequate. <input type="checkbox"/> Poor word choice. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks flow of style; wooden and/or awkward statements. <input type="checkbox"/> Several instances of tenses changing inappropriately, disagreement between subjects and verbs, or missing antecedents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Overall writing is disappointing. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are mixed: some are good; some need work. <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice is bland; needs improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions & flow need much improvement; reader can't follow narration. <input type="checkbox"/> Style errors like wrong tense changes or missing antecedents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Good, basic writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences lack excellent syntax. <input type="checkbox"/> Good word choice but could be improved. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks excellent flow—transition words, ordering of phrases, and subordinate clauses. <input type="checkbox"/> Style causes some confusion: tense changes, missing antecedents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Great sentence structure throughout. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent word choice. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent transitions carry the reader through the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Good tense use, subject/verb agreement, and clear antecedents throughout.
Mechanics (Only check 4 total bullets in this row.) Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Messy paper: inattention to neatness or improper formatting. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation/capitalization well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spent inadequate time on this assignment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not as neat as the student is capable of. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation & capitalization below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> General aspect of paper is "a rush job"; not well done.	<input type="checkbox"/> Neat, but some formatting improvement is called for. <input type="checkbox"/> Several errors in punctuation/capitalization. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling errors. <input type="checkbox"/> Generally hurried; not as good as could be.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very neat, clean copy, properly formatted. <input type="checkbox"/> Almost perfect punctuation/capitalization. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is done well. <input type="checkbox"/> Careful work, excellently done.

_____ Total lost points

To obtain final grade, subtract total lost points from 200 and divide by 2.