

# Lesson Plan: Personal Narrative Essay

By Ramona Duenas

Middle School Educator, Luis P. Untalan Middle School, Guam

**Subjects:** Language Arts

**Grade-level:** Middle [6-8]

**Time required:** 2-3 weeks

**Materials required:** Pen or pencil, paper, personal narrative writing assignment packet (handouts), comic strip template, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, crayons, colored pencils, computer, multimedia projector, document camera

**Related links:** Personal Narrative Writing Assignment Packet (search online if none is available), [Comic Strip Template](#), [Comic Strip Rubric](#), Oral Presentation Rubric, Student Self Evaluation Form, [Crossing Spaces](#), by Lola Quan Bautista

## Common Core State Standards

- **ELA-Literacy.W.6-8.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
  - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
  - Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

## Description

This lesson will allow students explore a moment in their lives to write a personal narrative essay. Personal narratives allow them to share their life with others and vicariously experience the things that happen around them. Their job as the writer is to put the reader in the midst of the action, letting him or her live through an experience.

## Objectives

- Identify elements of personal narrative
- Discuss characteristics of personal narratives
- Identify topic to create personal narrative
- Develop writing process skills by writing a personal narrative based on real events, utilizing the first person point of view
- Create a comic strip to illustrate their personal narrative

## Questions or Assessment

Students will demonstrate achievement based on their personal narrative essay, comic strip, and presentation of personal narrative.

## Procedure

### Day 1

1. Ask students to think of an exciting or memorable time in their lives. Give them five minutes to write about it.
2. As students work, talk to them about what makes a great personal narrative.
3. Allow students to share their chosen experience with a partner or table group and discuss the genre of personal narratives.
4. Explain the genre and characteristics of personal narratives and examine one or two short samples (“The Racist Warehouse” and “Giving Life”) from a Personal Narrative Writing Assignment Packet.
5. After reading each, have students turn and talk about the topic to a partner, sharing possible ideas.
6. With students, brainstorm other possible personal narrative ideas and record.
7. Answer student questions and ensure student understanding.
8. Have students view *Crossing Spaces* by Dr. Lola Quan Bautista.
9. After viewing the film, have students turn and talk about the personal narrative characteristics found in each story presented in the film.

10. After discussing both the written and filmed examples of personal narratives, review the due dates for the different parts of the project, which they'll write on the first page.
11. Have students review the writing menu and circle/highlight/write the topic they choose for their personal narrative essay.
12. Have students complete the prewriting documents for the project.

### Day 2

1. Review the Tips for Writing a Personal Narrative handout from the packet with the students.
2. After going over examples and discussion, have students complete the Personal Narrative Graphic Organizer based on the topic they chose previously.
3. After filling out the graphic organizer, have students begin writing their first draft of their personal narrative essay.

### Days 3-5

1. As students complete their essays throughout the week, have them review the Personal Narrative Revision Checklist.
2. Pair each student up with another student for peer editing, using the peer editing checklist provided to check for content, word choice, and mechanics.
3. Have students complete peer-editing checklist and attach to first draft for the writer to review afterward.
4. As students work in pairs to improve their writing, check with each group and answer any questions that they may have.
5. After peer-writing conferences are complete, have students write a second draft of their personal narratives for the teacher to edit.
6. After teacher has completed editing of the second draft, give back to students to type out neatly written final copy, keeping in mind the narrative writing rubric from the packet.

### Days 6-10

(or more if needed)

1. Review the visual aid component of the personal narrative project, the comic strip.
2. Go over examples of comic strips and how they help to tell stories.
3. Have students complete their comic strips in/out of class to attach to their narrative.
4. Comic strip should have similar components to the personal narrative essay (i.e., dialogue [word bubbles], characters, setting, captions for each box in the comic strip, etc.). Provide a comic strip rubric to students for guidance.
5. Review presentation criteria provided in a rubric.
6. After students have completed their comic strips, have students present their comic strips and/or essays to the class, using the document camera to project projects on board/wall in class.
7. Have students do a self-evaluation on lessons learned, what could be improved, and what they liked/did not like after completion of project.