

# Scoring Guide: Narrative Writing

Narrative writing re-creates a real or imagined experience. It usually contains four elements: characters, a setting, a chronological sequence of events, and a conflict or problem to be solved. The writer typically builds in high points by putting characters into interesting situations, weaving in plot twists, incorporating vivid details, and creating a central conflict or problem that builds suspense and holds the piece together.

<p>6</p> <p>HIGH</p>	<b>EXCEPTIONAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starts with a lead that sets up the story and draws in the reader.</li><li>• Contains characters that are believable, fresh, and well described. The characters grow and learn.</li><li>• Describes a setting that is unique and rich.</li><li>• Features events that are logically sequenced and move the story forward. Time and place work in harmony.</li><li>• Is a complete story that has never been told or is an original twist on a familiar story. The plot is well developed. There is a key conflict or problem that is compelling and eventually solved.</li><li>• Features well-used literary techniques, such as foreshadowing and symbolism.</li><li>• Leaves the reader feeling intrigued, delighted, surprised, entertained, and/or informed.</li><li>• Ends satisfyingly because the key conflict or problem is solved thoughtfully and credibly.</li></ul>
<p>5</p>	<b>STRONG</b>	
<p>4</p> <p>MIDDLE</p>	<b>REFINING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starts with a lead that sets the scene, but is predictable or unoriginal.</li><li>• Contains characters that are a bit too familiar. The characters show little change in their thinking or understanding as the story moves along.</li><li>• Offers a setting that is not described all that well.</li><li>• Features events that are given the same level of importance. Significant ones mingle with trivial ones, and sometimes stray from the main story line.</li><li>• Is a nearly complete story that may not contain new or original thinking. The plot moves forward, but then stumbles. Minor conflicts and problems distract from major ones.</li><li>• Contains examples of literary techniques such as foreshadowing and symbolism that are not all that effective.</li><li>• Leaves the reader engaged at some points, detached at others.</li><li>• Ends by providing the reader with a sense of resolution, but he or she may also feel unsatisfied or perplexed.</li></ul>
<p>3</p>	<b>DEVELOPING</b>	
<p>2</p> <p>LOW</p>	<b>EMERGING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starts with a lead that is perfunctory: "I'm going to tell you about the time..."</li><li>• Contains characters that don't feel real. The unconvincing characters are stereotypes or cardboard cutouts.</li><li>• Offers a setting that is not at all described clearly and/or completely.</li><li>• Features simple, incomplete events that don't relate to one another and/or add up to anything much. There is a mismatch between the time and place.</li><li>• Is a story that jumps around illogically. There is no clear conflict or problem to be solved.</li><li>• Contains no examples of literary techniques—or, at most, poor, purposeless ones</li><li>• Leaves the reader frustrated and/or disappointed. He or she feels the story was not thought out before it was committed to paper.</li><li>• Finishes with no clear ending or, at most, a halfhearted attempt at an ending, leaving the reader wondering why he or she bothered to read the piece.</li></ul>
<p>1</p>	<b>RUDIMENTARY</b>	