

# Narrative Essay Scoring Guide

	4	3	2	1
Ideas & Content	The writing is clear, focused and interesting. Main ideas are supported by relevant, carefully selected details; author provides a thorough exploration of the topic, making thoughtful connections and insights.	The writing is clear. Main ideas are supported by relevant details; author makes some insights or connections.	The writing is not consistently clear. Main ideas are rarely supported by relevant details; author does not make insights or connections.	The writing is frequently unclear. Main ideas are not supported by relevant details; author does not make insights or connections.
Narrative Organization	The introduction sets the stage for a first-person narrative. The body effectively tells the story. Effective and varied transitions are used throughout. The conclusion contains a satisfying reflection on the experience.*	The first-person narrative has a beginning, middle, and end. It tells a story. It contains a personal comment or reflection.	The first-person narration may lack a clear beginning or end. It contains a personal comment or thought, but it may require further elaboration.	The writing does not have a beginning, middle, or end. It may not be in first-person or lack any personal comment or reflection.
Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling	There are few or no errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling.	There are some errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling	Errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling interfere with the audience’s understanding of the process.	Serious and numerous errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling make understand the essay very difficult.
Style (Voice/Word Choice)	The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer demonstrates deep commitment to the topic. The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. Word choice is consistently precise and impactful.	A voice is present. The writer seems committed to the topic, and there may be a sense of “writing to be read.” In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere.	The writer’s commitment to the topic seems inconsistent. A sense of the writer may emerge at times; however, the voice is at time either inappropriate or ineffective. Many words are imprecise, redundant, or confusing.	The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. Word choices are mostly imprecise, redundant, or confusing.
Sentence Fluency	The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable.	The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be less than fluid. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading.	The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Occasional awkward constructions may force the reader to slow down or reread.	The writing tends to be either choppy or rambling. Awkward constructions often force the reader to slow down or reread.

\*It is possible to accomplish these goals with unconventional narrative techniques. For example, you might begin with a reflection on the experience before telling the story, or you may launch directly into a story with no introduction. Be sure you accomplish all the requirements of the essay if you attempt such creative approaches.