



The Principles of Good Narrative Writing

1. *Quality* is more important than *quantity*.
- * 2. Stories are told from either a *first-person* or a *third-person point of view* — *not both*.
3. Stories are told either in the *present tense* or the *past tense* — *not both*.
4. Good stories are written by writers who use *specific vocabulary*.
5. Good stories are written by writers who understand proper *pronoun-antecedent relationships*.
6. Good stories exhibit a *variety of sentence structures*.
7. Good stories exhibit *effective paragraphing*.
8. Good stories exhibit *effective sequencing*.
9. A good writer knows how to *properly set the table for his reader*.
10. A good writer knows how to *use dialogue correctly*.
11. A good writer knows how to *develop characters fully*.
12. Good stories are written by writers who *know how to end*.
13. A good writer views a story as a *creation*, not as a *task*.

* First person: I, my, we, our, etc

Third person: he, his, she, her, they, their, etc



What Is Narration?

Class Worksheet 1a

Exercise 1

In the paragraph below, certain key pronouns have been eliminated. Fill in the blanks properly to create a narrative paragraph that will reflect a first-person point of view.

_____ had been following the river for approximately an hour, and _____ legs felt very fatigued from the continuous walking. At this point the river forked off, so _____ chose the left trail. By now _____ eyes had become used to the darkness, and _____ was able to see a dozen feet or so in front of _____. _____ sat down for a brief rest, and as _____ looked to the right, _____ saw something white. _____ walked over to it and observed that it was a human skeleton. _____ let out an ear-piercing scream and fled from the spot. That skeleton started _____ thinking that _____ might possibly perish in this cave, and that thought was not particularly inviting. With greater resolve, _____ stuck with _____ plan and kept following the river. As the night wore on, it gradually became colder. _____ was so tired from _____ relentless walking, that _____ finally collapsed and fell into a deep sleep.

Exercise 2

Now rewrite the above paragraph from a third-person point of view. You might begin by naming the character in the first sentence. Remember that the gender you choose for the character will dictate your choice of pronouns throughout the rest of the paragraph.

_____ had been following the river for approximately an hour, and _____ legs felt very fatigued from the continuous walking. At this point the river forked off, so _____ chose the left trail. By now _____ eyes had become used to the darkness, and _____ was able to see a dozen feet or so in front of _____. _____ sat down for a brief rest, and as _____ looked to the right, _____ saw something white. _____ walked over to it and observed that it was a human skeleton. _____ let out an ear-piercing scream and fled from the spot. That skeleton started _____ thinking that _____ might possibly perish in this cave, and that thought was not particularly inviting. With greater resolve, _____ stuck with _____ plan and kept following the river. As the night wore on, it gradually became colder. _____ was so tired from _____ relentless walking, that _____ finally collapsed and fell into a deep sleep.



What Is Narration?

Class Worksheet 1b

Exercise 1

In order to produce effective narratives, a writer must understand the basic principles of good narrative writing. Fill in the blanks in the statements below to correctly complete the 13 principles.

1. _____ is more important than _____.
2. Stories are told from either a _____ point of view or from a _____ point of view, not from _____.
3. Stories are told either in the _____ tense or the _____ tense, not _____.
4. Good stories are written by writers who use _____ vocabulary.
5. Good stories are written by writers who understand proper _____ relationships.
6. Good stories exhibit a variety of _____.
7. Good stories exhibit effective _____.
8. Good stories exhibit effective _____.
9. A good writer knows how to properly set the _____ for his reader.
10. A good writer knows how to use _____ correctly.
11. A good writer knows how to develop _____ fully.
12. Good stories are written by writers who know how to _____.
13. A good writer views a story as a _____, not as a _____.

Exercise 2

In the paragraph below, certain key words have been omitted. Fill in the blanks to properly create a paragraph that is written from a third-person point of view. Then rewrite the paragraph on another sheet of paper from a first-person point of view.

As _____ sat close to the fire, _____ thought of _____ children laughing and the rest of _____ people. _____ missed the playing of the children and the talking of the adults. The only noise in the evening was the whistling of the wind in the cedar trees. The loneliness made _____ feel sad and empty inside. _____ lay down on _____ back and gazed at the crimson sunset.