

NARRATIVE ESSAY

WORKSHEET 1

The Narrative Hook

I had never been more anxious in my life. I had just spent the last three endless hours trying to get to the airport so that I could travel home.

Does this hook make you want to know what happened to the narrator? The hook should make the reader ask *wh-* questions about the essay. You may have thought of questions like these when you read the preceding example sentences:

Who is the narrator and why is he or she anxious?

Where is the airport?

What made the trip to the airport seem endless?

Why is this person going home?

Activity 1

Identifying Hooks

Read the sentences. Which three of these sentences are NOT good hooks for narrative essays? Put an X next to these sentences. Be ready to explain why you think these sentences do not work well as hooks for narrative essays.

1. ____ The roar of racecar engines ripped through the blazing heat of the day.
2. ____ It was freezing on that sad December day.
3. ____ After my brother's accident, I sat alone in the hospital waiting room.
4. ____ My friend and I shouldn't have been walking home alone so late on that

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dark winter night.

5. ____ Whales are by far the largest marine mammals.
6. ____ She gave her friend a birthday gift.
7. ____ The gleaming snow lay over the treacherous mountain like a soft white blanket, making the terrain seem safe instead of deadly.
8. ____ The Russian dictionary that we use in our language class has 500 pages.
9. ____ Sandra never expected to hear the deadly sound of a rattlesnake in her kitchen garden.
10. ____ A shot rang out in the silence of the night.

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Activity 2

Studying an Example Essay

In this narrative essay, a traveler has a frustrating experience at the airport.

1. Have you ever had trouble trying to get to someplace very important? Where were you going? Why were you having problems?
2. What is a hero? What do you consider to be a heroic act?



Frustration at the Airport

I had never been more anxious in my life. I had just spent the last three endless hours trying to get to the airport so that I could travel home. Now, as I watched the bus driver set my luggage on the airport sidewalk, I realized that my frustration had only just begun.

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2 This was my first visit to the international section of the airport, and nothing was familiar. I could not make sense of all the signs. Where was the ticket counter? Where should I take my luggage? I had no idea where the customs line was. I began to panic.

What time was it? Where was my airplane? I had to find help because I could not be late!

3 I tried to ask a passing businessman for help, but all my words came out wrong. He just scowled and walked away. What had happened? I had been in this country for a whole semester, and I could not even remember how to ask for directions. This was awful! Another bus arrived at the terminal, and the passengers came out carrying all sorts of luggage. Here was my chance! I could follow them to the right place, and I would not have to say a word to them.

4 I dragged my enormous suitcase behind me and followed the group. We finally got to the elevators. Oh, no!! They all fit in, but there was not enough room for me. I watched in despair as the elevator doors closed. I had no idea what to do next. I got on the elevator when it returned and gazed at all the buttons. Which one would it be? I pressed

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button 3. The elevator slowly climbed up to the third floor and jerked to a stop. A high squeaking noise announced the opening of the doors, and I looked around timidly.

5 Tears formed in my eyes as I saw the deserted lobby and realized that I would miss my airplane. Just then an old airport employee shuffled around the corner. He saw that I was lost and asked if he could help. He gave me his handkerchief to dry my eyes as I related my predicament. He smiled kindly, took me by the hand, and led me down a long hallway. We walked up some stairs, turned a corner, and at last, there was customs! He led me past all the lines of people and pushed my luggage to the inspection counter.

6 When I turned to thank him for all his help, he was gone. I will never know that wonderful man's name, but I will always remember his unexpected courtesy. He helped me when I needed it the most. I can only hope that one day I will be able to do the same for another traveler who is suffering through a terrible journey.

frustration: feeling of impatience and discouragement

scowl: to frown

terminal: an arrival and departure point for some forms of mass transportation

despair: the condition of having no hope

gaze: to look at slowly and steadily

jerk: to move with an abrupt motion

timidly: hesitantly or fearfully

shuffle: to walk by sliding one's feet along the ground

predicament: a troubling situation

courtesy: a kind or polite action

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3. What is the narrative hook?

4. Do you think the hook is effective (did it grab your attention)? Why, or why not?

5. Where is the setting of this story (where does it take place)?

6. What is the theme, or the basic idea, of "Frustration at the Airport"?

7. What do you think the mood of the story is? What feeling or atmosphere does the writer create?

8. Who are the characters?

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9. What verb tense is used in "Frustration at the Airport"? _____ Write any five verbs here.

10. Is the story arranged in chronological, or time, order? In a few words, describe what happens first, second, third, and so on.

11. Underline the transitional sentences.

12. Does the story end with a moral or a revelation? If so, write it here:
