**A narrative essay** is a story, a TRUE story. It shows people in conflict working toward a resolution. For essays of this sort, some point, main idea, truth, message, and/or lesson is conveyed to the reader. Think of the best stories you have read (fiction or non-fiction) and then think about what it was that made that story one of the best you have read. Now try to do some of the same things in your essay that the best writers you have read have done in their stories. The Description part of this essay comes from the necessity to describe the people and places involved with the story, but do not get bogged down describing. Limit description to vital information.

Your essay should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Readers should know **characters**, **setting**, **conflicts**, **resolution**, and should get some sense of the **point** for the story being told (often this is a lesson someone in the story learned). The setting and the people should be described well enough for readers to feel like they know the places and people. **Plot** the story to have the fewest meaningful events necessary for to make your point.

Like all good stories, your narrative essay should make your reader feel they are experiencing at least some of what the people in the story felt. **SHOW, DON’T TELL:**

Don’t tell the reader what to feel (as in “I was really scared” or “It was mighty hot”); show the reader how the characters are dealing with whatever life has thrown at them, and the reader will more likely feel what the characters in the story felt. So instead of “I was really scared,” try “We were standing in the dark in the barn and heard the unmistakable clatter that only means one thing—a rattlesnake.” We as readers get it, you were scared. The key is SHOW rather that TELL. Don’t tell us “it was mighty hot,” try “Anything that had the nerve to move out of the shade stood a good chance of bursting into flames,” or “I didn’t know my mother could sweat until we went to Scottsdale.”

**MATCH THE LENGTH OF THE LINE TO THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT:**

If the characters are in a scary situation, use short choppy sentences. If someone is walking down the street and doesn’t see the piano falling from the thirteenth floor, you wouldn’t say, “I beg your pardon, but have you noticed that Steinway, or is it a Yamaha, no it’s a Steinway, seems to be hurtling out of control toward the very square of the sidewalk where you will be ambling?” You would say, “STOP!” or “LOOK OUT!” Long sentences are best to convey a slower pace where people have the time to contemplate and ponder and pass the time easy. Always true for dialogue. Usually true for exposition.

**Write an essay that is 500 to 1000 or so, but no more than 1250 words**. It must be typed, double spaced, using Times New Roman 12 or Calibri Font 11. Have a title that does some work (NOT essay 1 or narrative essay). Do not have a cover page. Have a heading as shown below:

Name 1301-00?

Narrative (Final draft) 09/19/13

Falling to the World

**Some Keys to Success**

* Essay can be in first or third person, **but it will most likely be a first person account of something you experienced.**
* You are allowed some poetic license (dialogue should sound natural, so if you need to change it from exactly what was said, you can; if you need to add *some* details for the reader to understand the story, you can).
* Remember that the essay is short, so your story cannot involve a long period of time and still include all the specific details needed for the reader to get and care about the story.
  + So, do not tell the story of your life, a year from your life, a school year, a sports season, a season (summer, etc.).
* The story can be about anything (but avoid taboo topics listed below) where people the reader can care about are in conflict of some sort. The conflict **must** be resolved.
  + Stories that are so sad that the reader doesn’t want to continue are the hardest stories to write well, so pick your topic wisely.
  + You are allowed to be funny, but you must actually BE funny. *Trying* to be funny is terrible.
* Taboo topics: Sex, drugs, alcohol, anything that might be like an episode of *Jackass*, crimes you committed, death, dismemberment, cancer, AIDS, religion, politics, leaving home to come to college, a school year, a semester, a sports season, a year in your life, your life story, losing a pet, getting a tattoo or piercing somewhere on your body that cannot be seen when you are fully dressed.