

Assignment

A narrative is a story that may be true or fictional. Write a fictional historical narrative set in Europe during the Middle Ages.

TIP **Adding Details** Help your audience get a feel for the setting by using sensory details. As you think about everyday life in the Middle Ages, make note of details that describe how things might have looked, felt, sounded, smelled, or tasted.



ELA Writing 7.2.1 Write fictional or autobiographical texts.

A Historical Narrative

What was life like in Europe? Where did people live? How did they spend their days? You can learn more about history by researching and writing a narrative that is set in a different time and place.

1. Prewrite

Planning Character and Setting

You should write your narrative from the point of view of someone who lived during that time.

- **The Narrator** Is the person telling your story a knight, a peasant, or a priest? A lady or a lady's maid?
- **The Event** What event or incident will your narrator experience? A jousting tournament? A Viking invasion? A religious pilgrimage? A famine or fire in the village?
- **The Setting** How will the time, between 800 and 1200 AD, and place, somewhere in Europe, affect this person? What will he or she want out of life or would fear or admire?

Developing a Plot

Select an event or incident, and then ask yourself these questions.

- How would the event have unfolded? In other words, what would have happened first, second, third, and so on?
- What problem might face your narrator during this event? How could your narrator solve this problem?

2. Write

Have your narrator tell what happened in the first person, using *I*, *me*, *we*, *us*, etc. For example, *I woke up early. We stopped by a stream.* Then use the framework below to help you write your first draft.

A Writer's Framework

Introduction

- Grab the reader's attention.
- Offer needed background information about the place and the people involved in the event.

Body

- Start with the beginning of the incident or event, and present the actions in the order they happen.
- Build to a suspenseful moment when the outcome is uncertain.

Conclusion

- Show how the narrator solves his or her problem.
- Explain how the narrator changes or how his or her life changes.

3. Evaluate and Revise

Evaluating

Read through the first draft of your narrative. Then use the guidelines below to consider its content and organization.

Evaluation Questions for a Fictional Historical Narrative

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|---|---|
| ■ Do you grab the reader's attention at the very beginning? | ■ Do you tell the actions in the order they happen or happened? |
| ■ Do you include background information to explain the time, place, and people involved in the event? | ■ Do you show how the narrator solves the problem or how it is solved for him or her? |
| ■ Do you use first-person pronouns to show that your narrator is the central person in the event? | ■ Do you explain how the narrator changes as a result of the event? |

Revising

Before you share your narrative with others, have a classmate read it and retell the narrative to you. Add details at any point where his or her retelling seems uncertain or dull. Add transitions to show how events are connected in time.

4. Proofread and Publish

Proofreading

Weak word choice can drain the life from your narrative. Vague nouns and adjectives do little to spark the interest and imagination of readers. In contrast, precise words make your story come alive. They tell readers exactly what the characters and setting are like.

- **Vague Nouns or Pronouns** Words like *man* and *it* tell your readers little. Replace them with precise words, like *peasant* or *cottage*.
- **Vague adjectives** Would you prefer an experience that is *nice* or *fun*, or one that is *thrilling*, *exhilarating*, or *stirring*?

Publishing

You can publish your historical narrative by reading it aloud in class or by posting it on a class authors' wall. You may also publish all the narratives in your class as an Internet page or in a photocopied literary magazine.

Practice and Apply

Use the steps and strategies outlined in this workshop to write your historical narrative.

TIP

Describing Actions We

communicate not only with our words but also with our actions. By describing specific actions—movements, gestures, and facial expressions—you can make people in your narrative live and breathe.

TIP

Connecting Events

To improve your narrative, use transitions such as *next*, *later*, and *finally* to show the order in which the events and actions happen or happened.