

Personal Narrative Writing: Story Elements

You will need to consider the following **story elements** in writing your personal narrative.

Setting: The setting is when and where the story takes place. The setting could include past, present, or future, time of day, season, and year. Is there a particular tone to the setting? Example: scary, happy, sinister, depressing? Additionally, there may be more than a single setting in a story.

Characters: Characters are the people in a story. There is usually a main character (who the story is mostly about) and one or more supporting characters. Supporting characters interact with the main character. The main character is faced with a problem that needs to be solved (resolved). Characters can be described externally (appearance) and internally (the character's personality and heart).

Problem: Every story has a problem, also called the conflict. The main character usually struggles with nature, a person, society, or himself.

Events: Events are the things that happen in the story that lead to solving the problem. Events are also referred to as the plot. The events are a sequence of small problems that lead eventually to a solution.

Solution: The solution (also called resolution) is how the problem was solved. It is now clear what happens to the main character. It is up to the author to provide a sense of closure or justice so the reader feels satisfied at the end of the story.

Theme: The theme is what the story *means*. How does the story relate to life in general? A story without a theme is hardly more than a list of events. The events themselves may be interesting or exciting but it is the human connection that will engage the reader's attention. Your choice of theme is important. Not only must it appeal to the reader, but it must also appeal to you.

Here are a few examples of themes frequently used in stories.

- Courage
- Fear
- Justice (fairness)
- Love
- Loss
- Power
- Survival

Point of view: Point of view refers to who is telling or narrating the story.