

Rubric for Narrative Writing—Seventh Grade

| | Grade 5 (1 POINT) | 1.5 PTS | Grade 6 (2 POINTS) | 2.5 PTS | Grade 7 (3 POINTS) | 3.5 PTS | Grade 8 (4 POINTS) | SCORE |
|--------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|---|-----------|---|-------|
| STRUCTURE | | | | | | | | |
| Overall | The writer wrote a story of an important moment. It reads like a story, even though it might be a true account. | Mid-level | The writer wrote a story that has tension, resolution, and realistic characters, and also conveys an idea, lesson, or theme. | Mid-level | The writer created a narrative that has realistic characters, tension, and change, and that not only conveys, but also develops an idea, lesson, or theme. | Mid-level | The writer not only created a narrative with well-developed characters who change, he used the story to comment on a social issue, teach a lesson, and/or develop a point of view. | |
| Lead | The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only showed what was happening and where, but also gave some clues to what would later become a problem for the main character. | Mid-level | The writer wrote a beginning that not only set the plot/story in motion, but also hinted at the larger meaning the story would convey. It introduced the problem, set the stage for the lesson that would be learned, or showed how the character relates to the setting in a way that matters in the story. | Mid-level | The writer wrote a beginning that not only sets the story in motion, it also grounds it in a place or situation. It includes details that will later be important to the story. These details might point to the central issue or conflict, show how story elements connect, or hint at key character traits. | Mid-level | The writer wrote a beginning that establishes the situation and place, hinting at a bigger context for the story (revealing issues that have been brewing, showing how the setting affects the character, contextualizing a time in history, developing one out of many points of view). | |
| Transitions | The writer used transitional phrases to show passage of time in complicated ways, perhaps by showing things happening at the same time (<i>meanwhile, at the same time</i>) or flashback and flash-forward (<i>early that morning, three hours later</i>). | Mid-level | The writer not only used transitional phrases and clauses to signal complicated changes in time, she also used them to alert her readers to changes in the setting, tone, mood, point of view, or time in the story (such as <i>suddenly, unlike before, if only she had known</i>). | Mid-level | The writer used transitional phrases and clauses to connect what happened to why it happened (<i>If he hadn't . . . he might not have, because of, although, little did she know that</i>). | Mid-level | The writer used transitional phrases and clauses, grammatical structures (paragraphing, descriptive phrases, and clauses) and text structures (chapter divisions, extended italics) to alert his reader to changes in the setting, the mood, the point of view, or the time in the story. | |
| Ending | The writer wrote an ending that connected to the main part of the story. The character said, did, or realized something at the end that came from what happened previously in the story. The writer gave readers a sense of closure. | Mid-level | The writer wrote an ending that connected to what the story is really about. She gave the reader a sense of closure by showing a new realization or insight or a change in the character/narrator. The writer showed this through dialogue, action, inner thinking, or small actions the character takes. | Mid-level | The writer gave the reader a sense of closure by showing clearly how the character or place changed or the problem was resolved. If there was no resolution, he gave details to leave the reader thinking about a central idea or theme. | Mid-level | The writer gave the reader a sense of closure by revealing character change(s) that followed from events in the story, or a resolution. If there was no resolution, she wrote to convey how the events of the story affected the characters, and to circle back to a central idea, issue, or theme. | |

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| STRUCTURE (cont.) | | | | | | | | |
| Organization | The writer used paragraphs to separate different parts or times in the story and to show when a new character was speaking. Some parts of the story are longer and more developed than others. | Mid-level | The writer used paragraphs purposefully, perhaps to show time and setting changes, new parts of the story, or to create suspense. She created a logical, clear sequence of events. | Mid-level | The writer used a traditional—or slightly modified—story structure (rising action, conflict, falling action) to best bring out the meaning of his story and reach his audience. | Mid-level | The writer modified a traditional story structure, dealing with time in purposeful ways, to best suit her genre, bring out the meaning of her story, and reach her audience. | |
| | | | | | | | | TOTAL: |
| DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | | |
| Elaboration* | The writer developed characters, setting, and plot throughout this story, especially the heart of the story. To do this, she used a blend of description, action, dialogue, and thinking. | Mid-level | The writer developed realistic characters, and developed the details, action, dialogue, and internal thinking that contribute to the deeper meaning of the story. | Mid-level | The writer developed the action, dialogue, details, and inner thinking to convey an issue, idea, or lesson. He showed what is specific about the central character. The writer developed the setting and the characters' relationship to the setting. | Mid-level | The writer developed complicated story elements: she may have contrasted the character's thinking with his or her actions or dialogue. The writer developed the central character's relationship to other characters. She showed character flaws as well as strengths to add complexity. The writer used details that related to and conveyed meaning or developed a lesson or theme. | |
| Craft* | The writer showed why characters act and speak as they do by including their thinking and their responses to what happened. The writer slowed down the heart of the story. She made less important parts shorter and less detailed and blended storytelling and summary as needed. The writer included precise details and used figurative language so that readers could picture the setting, characters, and events. She used some objects or actions as symbols to bring forth her meaning. | Mid-level | The writer developed some relationship between characters to show <i>why</i> they act and speak as they do. He told the internal, as well as the external story. The writer wove together precise descriptions, figurative language, and some symbolism to help readers picture the setting, actions, and events and to bring forth meaning. The writer used language that fit his story's meaning and context (e.g., different characters use different kinds of language). | Mid-level | The writer developed contradictions and change in characters and situations. The writer used specific details and figurative language to help the reader understand the place and the mood (making an object or place symbolic, using the weather, using repetition). The writer varied her tone to match the variety of emotions experienced by the characters across the story. | Mid-level | The writer conveyed the pressures characters feel and the dreams they hold. He related those to their actions. The writer developed complicated characters who change and/or who change others. The writer created a mood as well as a physical setting, and showed how the place changed, or its relationships to the characters changed. The writer used symbolism to connect with a theme. | |

*Elaboration and Craft are double-weighted categories: Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. For example, if a student exceeds expectations in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points. If a student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 6 points instead of 3 points.

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| DEVELOPMENT (cont.) | | | | | | | | |
| Craft (cont.) | The writer varied her sentences to create the pace and tone of her narrative. | | | | | | The writer varied his tone to bring out different perspectives within the story, or to show a gap between the narrator's point of view and that of other characters. | |
| | | | | | | | | TOTAL: |
| CONVENTIONS | | | | | | | | |
| Spelling | The writer used what he knows about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit. He used the word wall and dictionaries when needed. | Mid-level | The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing are spelled correctly. | Mid-level | The writer used the Internet and other sources at hand to check spelling of literary and high-frequency words. | Mid-level | The writer used the Internet and other sources to check the spelling of literary, historical, and geographical words. | |
| Punctuation and Sentence Structure | The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences (<i>one day at the park,</i>). She also used commas to show when a character is talking directly to someone, such as <i>Are you mad, Mom?</i> | Mid-level | The writer used punctuation such as dashes, parentheses, colons, and semicolons to help him include extra detail and explanation in some of his sentences. The writer used commas and quotation marks or italics or some other way to make clear when characters are speaking. | Mid-level | The writer varied her sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure. The writer punctuated dialogue sections accurately. | Mid-level | The writer used different sentence structures to achieve different purposes throughout his piece. The writer used verb tenses that shift when needed (as in when moving from a flashback back into the present tense of the story), deciding between active and passive voice where appropriate. | |
| | | | | | | | | TOTAL: |

Teachers, we created these rubrics so you will have your own place to pull together scores of student work. You can use these assessments immediately after giving the on-demands and also for self-assessment and setting goals.

Scoring Guide

In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Craft are worth double the point value (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 instead of 1. 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, or 4).

Total the number of points and then track students' progress by seeing when the total points increase.

Total score: _____

If you want to translate this score into a grade, you can use the provided table to score each student on a scale of 0–4.

| Number of Points | Scaled Score |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1–11 | 1 |
| 11.5–16.5 | 1.5 |
| 17–22 | 2 |
| 22.5–27.5 | 2.5 |
| 28–33 | 3 |
| 33.5–38.5 | 3.5 |
| 39–44 | 4 |