

Planning

Purpose and Audience

Before you begin to write, be sure that you understand your purpose for writing. Consider your audience so that you use language that is appropriate.

Use the prompt to answer these questions.

1. Why are you writing a short story?

2. Who will read your short story?

3. Who will be the narrator of your story?

Prewriting

Writing a personal narrative is a lot like writing any story. You need to think about the characters. You need to think about the setting and the plot. You need to tell what happened in an order that makes sense.

Annie used a story organizer to write some ideas about her story.

<u>Characters: Jane, Aunt Maude, Mom</u>		<u>Setting: Jane's home, restaurant</u>
<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>End</u>
scared of Aunt Maude	go to lunch	Aunt Maude admits trick
get hat as gift	wear awful hat	no need to be scared
afraid to say anything	people stare	okay to tell the truth

Use Annie's notes to answer these questions.

1. How does Annie's story begin?

2. How does Annie's story end?

Drafting

Organizing

Annie's story organizer will help her write her story in order from beginning to end. She begins by introducing the situation, along with the main characters and setting.

My name is Jane, and I admit it. I'm a coward.
I've always been scared of Aunt Maude, my great aunt.
She's tall and stern. When she visited our house last spring,
I was on my best behavior.

Answer these questions about Annie's opening paragraph.

1. Who is narrating the story? _____
2. Which part tells about the time and place where the story is set? Circle it.
3. Which part tells the narrator's problem? Underline it.
4. What descriptive words does Annie use to tell about Aunt Maude?

Dialogue

Stories may use dialogue as well as description to tell what happens. Read the dialogue in Annie's second paragraph.

Aunt Maude handed me a box. "Open it," she commanded.
I opened it and pulled out the most hideous green hat you
ever saw.

What does the dialogue tell you about Aunt Maude?

Pacing

The beginning of a story can be slow-paced, because it introduces the situation. Notice how Annie’s action speeds up by the next section of her story.

“Ready for lunch?” asked Mom.

Then we were off in a taxi, with me wearing that hat. I was just too afraid to say a word. As we got out and walked into the restaurant, I could feel people staring.

Revising and Editing

Revising for Content and Argument

After you write, read your work carefully and share it with a classmate or adult. Use this checklist to see what you might fix.

Look at the changes Annie made to the middle of her story.

REVISING NARRATIVE WRITING

- Can my reader tell what is happening in my story?
- Are my sentences all about the same topic?
- Did I use dialogue and description to show how characters feel?

“Ready for lunch?” asked Mom.

Then we were off in a taxi, with me wearing that hat. I was just too afraid to say a word. As we got out and walked into the restaurant, I could feel people staring.

Answer these questions about Annie’s edited paragraphs.

- What does the word *brightly* tell you about Jane’s mother’s understanding of Jane’s problem?

2. Why did Annie add the final sentence?

Revising for Clarity and Style

Revise your writing to make it clear and interesting.

Annie reread this part of her story and made some important changes.

REVISING NARRATIVE WRITING

- Does my story have a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Could I add transition words to make the action clearer?
- Do my characters act and speak in ways that seem real?

When I looked up,
 We ordered, and I tried to hide my shame. Aunt Maude
 was giggling. Giggling? Aunt Maude? “Sorry,” she gasped.
 “I simply can’t help it. That hat is ghastly.”

Answer these questions about Annie’s revisions.

1. Why did Annie add a phrase to sentence 2?

2. Why did Annie add and underline the word *so*?

Proofreading

Before you finish writing, look for mistakes using this checklist.

Annie made some mistakes in her story ending. Use the proofreading marks in Appendix 2 to proofread this part of Annie's story.

PROOFREADING CHECKLIST

- Did I indent my paragraphs?
- Did I use capital letters correctly?
- Did I use punctuation marks correctly?
- Did I spell all words correctly?

I ripped the hat off my head. "Sorry," giggled Aunt Maude. "I knew it was awful, but I had to see whether you would wear it anyway. You're a lovely child but you mustn't be afraid to tell the truth. You needn't tell me it's a horrid gift, you needn't embarrass yourself either. It's possible to be polite without lying!"

Publishing

Think about your audience when you decide how to publish your story.



Scriptwriters publish their work as movies. Annie decided to share her story with other children this way:

Step 1: Type up the story in several pages on the computer.

Step 2: Draw pictures to go with each part of the story.

Step 3: Staple the pages together as a book for the school library.



Read Annie's story. Think about where she might add pictures. On a separate sheet of paper, draw at least three illustrations for the story.

A Lesson from Aunt Maude

by Annie H.

My name is Jane, and I admit it. I'm a coward. I've always been scared of Aunt Maude, my great aunt. She's tall and stern. When she visited our house last spring, I was on my best behavior.

Aunt Maude handed me a box. "Open it," she commanded. I opened it and pulled out the most hideous green hat you can imagine.

"Ready for lunch?" asked Mom brightly.

Then we were off in a taxi, with me wearing that horrible hat. I was just too afraid to say a word. As we got out and walked into the restaurant, I could feel people staring. I was mortified.

We ordered, and I tried to hide my shame. When I looked up, Aunt Maude was giggling. Giggling? Aunt Maude? "Sorry," she gasped. "I simply can't help it. That hat is so ghastly."

I ripped the hat off my head. "Sorry," giggled Aunt Maude. "I knew it was awful, but I had to see whether you would wear it anyway. You're a lovely child, but you mustn't be afraid to tell the truth. You needn't tell me it's a horrid gift, but you needn't embarrass yourself either. It's possible to be polite without lying!"



On Your Own



Choose one of these prompts. Follow the steps in this lesson to do your own narrative writing.

A MOVIE SCENE

1. Write a silly scene between two people in a slapstick movie.

Decide on the problem the two people face. Decide what they say and do. Use dialogue and stage directions in parentheses to show what happens and how people feel.

Here is an example.

GROUCHO (angrily): What do you mean?

CHICO: I mean nothing. (*He starts to walk away.*)

A TALL TALE

2. A tall tale is a folktale that uses exaggerated characters and action to tell a funny story. Often the tale tells a made-up story about how something in the United States came to be.

Choose one of these topics. Write a tall tale that explains in a silly way how it was made. Invent crazy characters and give them humorous dialogue.

The Great Lakes
Lakes

The Smoky
Mountains

The Grand Canyon
Canyon

The Mississippi
Delta

A SHORT STORY

3. Use this story starter to write a short story. Pace the action in your story to hold your reader's interest.

Trish and Marvin were told never to climb the ladder to Grandmother's attic, but that just made it more tempting. . . .

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

4. A holiday is a special time, but sometimes your anticipation of the holiday is better than the real thing.

Write a personal narrative about a time when a holiday didn't quite work out as you expected. Start your narrative by introducing the situation, characters, and setting. Use dialogue and description to move the story along. End with a conclusion that ties the story together.