

G3 Playlist: Temporal Words and Phrases

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.C*:

- Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

Welcome

When writers are telling a narrative, it is important for the reader to understand how time is moving along in the story. In order for the reader to have a sense of chronological order, writers use temporal transition words and phrases to tell the reader when specific events are happening in relation to other events. Many people already use these words in daily speech—for example, to give a summary of how their day was or tell what they did on vacation—by using words such as *after*, *before*, *then*, or *during*. Without this guidance, readers may not have clues to let them know the order in which the events of the day or the vacation happened. Understanding how temporal transition words are used, and when to use them appropriately, allows writers to tell accurate and detailed stories or a sequence of events.

Watch!

Watch this video as an introduction to using temporal transitional phrases in a story or narrative for the reader to understand the passage of time:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpEx16n1A4>

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- use temporal words and phrases to show the passage of time.
- determine which temporal words and phrases enhance the flow of the story.

Review

Key Terms

- **Temporal words** are used to indicate the passage of time or describe the position of an event in time, usually through the form of a transitional preposition (e.g., *after*, *before*, *during*, *until*).
- A **narrative** is like telling a story—a spoken or written account of connected events. Narratives are usually personal in that they tell a story from memory or personal experience, but they can also be fictionalized, like many stories, fables, or myths throughout the history of literature.

Exploring the Standard

When writing a narrative, whether fiction or non-fiction, writers need to clue the reader to the passage of time and the order in which events happen. To do so, writers use temporal transition words.



The following table shows some common temporal words that writers can use:

after/afterward	before	between	by	during
following	from	on	since	until
while	then	begin	first, second...	next
finally	now	eventually	earlier/later	shortly

Writers can also adapt these individual words into phrases to indicate time and add even more detail and specificity:

after that	at first/at last	at the moment	in the end	from then on
as soon as	shortly thereafter	next week/month	soon after	after a while
not long after	some of the time	from time to time	at times	some of the time
at last	to finish/conclude	in the end	later on	not long ago

Choosing the right word or phrase depends on how and when the events actually happened in relation to other events or on the effect the writer wishes to have on the reader. For example, some of these words and phrases offer suspense, immediacy, or a formal sequence (first, second, last). It is up to the writer to choose how he or she will tell the story and what details to provide.

Example

Let's say a writer wants to tell someone about his or her day at school, and he or she wants to include the following list of information:

- Waking up
- Arriving at school
- Daily schedule
- Favorite activity
- Examples of topics talked about
- Coming home
- Personal reflection

Since this is a personal narrative, the writer is aware of the specific details he or she wishes to include, but how would the reader know when these events happened? How does the reader know this isn't a story about a week instead of one day? To make it clear that the story takes place throughout the course of a single day, the writer can insert temporal transition words and phrases to let the reader know the time frames in which the events happen.

