

Grade 7 Playlist: Using Narrative Techniques

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.B:

- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Welcome

“Ava wanted to spend the entire vacation at Disneyland, but Suzie longed to make a stop at Sequoia National Park.” As Brenda writes this story about two sisters and their family vacation to California, she tries to decide how to develop it. In Brenda’s story, Ava will decide that she wants to see Sequoia National Park as well, but what exactly will happen to make her change her mind? Brenda chooses to include dialogue between the sisters, in which Suzie explains her desire to walk among the redwood forests, and she manages to convince her sister to agree that a visit there will make the trip even more memorable than one only to Disneyland. The incorporation of dialogue in the story will help Brenda develop the characters and their relationship as well as move the story along. How would the story be different if Ava and Suzie never said a word to each other? Decisions such as these are an important part of developing stories. These narrative techniques help make a story interesting, make connections between events and characters, and move the plot along!

Read!

The following website gives a review of plot elements in a narrative:

<http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/weltys/502/conceptmap.html>

Objectives

In this playlist students will learn how to:

- use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description.
- develop experiences, events, and characters using narrative techniques.

Review

Key Terms

- **Description** involves the use of details to create a mental image for the reader. These can include **sensory details** (descriptions of how things look, sound, feel, smell, or taste) or details that describe actions (such as the characters’ movements, expressions, or reactions).
- **Dialogue** includes the things that characters in a narrative say to each other in conversations between two or more characters. If a character is speaking alone (to the reader or audience, but not to another character), that type of speech is called **monologue**.
 - **Interior monologue** (also called **inner voice**) involves thoughts rather than speech; in other words, what a character says to himself or herself but does not say out loud.



- **Pacing** is the speed at which a story’s action takes place. An author may change the pace of their story to create **suspense**, or excitement about an outcome that has not been revealed, or **tension**, a sense of heightened uncertainty in a story.

Read!

Read the last page for a review of literary plot structure elements:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson904/MidPlotStructure.pdf

Read the following excerpt, from an adaptation of the Japanese folktale “My Lord, Bag of Rice” as retold by Yei Theodora Ozaki. It tells the story of an event in the journey of Fujiwara Hidesato, a brave warrior seeking an adventure. Consider what the descriptions reveal.

Example 1

He buckled on his two swords, took his huge bow, much taller than himself, in his hand, and slinging his quiver on his back started out. He had not gone far when he came to the bridge of Seta-no-Karashi spanning one end of the beautiful Lake Biwa. No sooner had he set foot on the bridge than he saw lying right across his path a huge serpent-dragon. Its body was so big that it looked like the trunk of a large pine tree and it took up the whole width of the bridge. One of its huge claws rested on the parapet of one side of the bridge, while its tail lay right against the other. The monster seemed to be asleep, and as it breathed, fire and smoke came out of its nostrils.

What are some examples of description that the author uses in this excerpt?

- The main character owns many weapons, including two swords and a bow “much taller than himself.” The reader can assume that he is skilled in all of them, and that he expects to encounter danger on his journey (which would explain why he is carrying all of them at once). These details allow the reader to sense that the main character is a brave and able warrior.
- The author uses a simile to compare the dragon and a tree: “Its body was so big that it looked like the trunk of a large pine tree.” The trunk of a tree is big and strong, so by comparing the dragon to the tree, he is suggesting that the dragon is also big and strong.
- The sentence “the monster seemed to be asleep, and as it breathed, fire and smoke came out of its nostrils” includes sensory observation, focusing on sight. This description also tells how dangerous the dragon is—even when it is sleeping.

Now explore how to **use narrative techniques** when **writing a story, instead of analyzing it**.

