

Grade 8 Playlist: Using Narrative Techniques

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B*:

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

Welcome

Brenda has just finished the first draft of a story about two sisters and a family vacation to California. In her story, Ava had wanted to spend the entire two weeks in Disneyland. Two weeks in Disneyland—who wouldn't think that would be a great idea? Apparently, her sister Suzie disagreed. She wanted to spend part of the time in Sequoia National Park. Ava did not understand why anyone would want to go see a bunch of trees in a forest when they could go to Disneyland, but her sister managed to convince her, and in the end Ava was glad of it. But Brenda does not know how to end her story. It comes to an abrupt stop, just after the two sisters check out of their hotel and head home. So Brenda decides to use reflection, focusing on what Ava has learned in this story. "Ava began to think about how peaceful it was to walk among those ancient trees, and she realized that in the future she would be more receptive to outside ideas rather than obsessing over what she wanted to do."

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, description, and reflection.
- 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.
- **Reflection** is a narrative technique in which a story is concluded with the final thoughts of the author or of one or more characters, such as a lesson that has been learned in the 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

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.
- This 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.**

