

# Narrative Essay

*Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes—to understand their feelings, thoughts, and experiences from their point of view. Empathy isn't just about recognizing someone's emotions, it's about making a connection that allows people to feel understood. Stories are a powerful way to build empathy. When we hear or share personal experiences, we not only learn about each other but also deepen our sense of compassion and connection.*

*In this narrative essay, you'll have the opportunity to share a personal story that highlights the power of empathy, whether you were on the giving or receiving end. Your story should show how practicing empathy influenced you or others in a meaningful way.*

## Essay Prompt

**Write a narrative essay about a time when you experienced or showed empathy. You can choose to write about a moment when someone listened to and understood your feelings, or a time when you practiced empathetic listening to support someone else. In your essay, focus on how this experience affected you, the other person, or your understanding of empathy.**

## Consider including details about:

- The specific situation you are writing about and the individuals involved.
- The emotions you felt before, during, and after the moment of empathy or empathetic listening.
- How your act of empathy or the other person's act of empathy made a difference in the outcome of the conversation or interaction.
- What you learned from the experience and what you learned about the power of connection and empathy.

## Tips to assist you with writing your narrative:

- Focus on a single event or moment: Choose one clear experience where empathy was important. Avoid writing about multiple events to keep your story focused.
- Use vivid descriptions: Show, don't just tell. Use descriptive language to bring the emotions, setting, and people in your story to life so your readers can feel the experience as you did.
- Include dialogue if appropriate: Conversations are a key part of many empathetic moments. If there was an important exchange of words, use dialogue to capture what was said and how it influenced the interaction.
- Reflect on the meaning of the event: Don't just tell the story—explain why this experience was important and how it changed the way you see empathy or relationships. What did you learn about yourself or others?
- Structure your essay: Make sure your essay has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Start by introducing the situation, build up the events leading to the empathetic moment, and end by reflecting on the impact of that moment.

## Expectations:

- Length: Your narrative should be between 500–800 words.
- Introduction: Start with an engaging opening that draws the reader into your story.
- Body paragraphs: Develop the narrative in a way that flows naturally, using details, dialogue, and descriptions to build up to the key moment of empathy.
- Conclusion: Reflect on the lesson or insight you gained from this experience and how it shaped your understanding of empathy.
- Voice and tone: Use your own voice to tell the story, but be sure to keep your tone appropriate for a narrative essay.
- Grammar and clarity: Write clearly, check your grammar, and revise your essay to make sure it flows smoothly.

# Narrative Essay

*This worksheet will help you plan and write your Empathy Narrative Essay. Use the steps below to organize your thoughts, develop your story, and reflect on the power of empathy.*

## Step 1: Brainstorm Your Story

*Before you start writing, think about a specific moment when you experienced or showed empathy. Use these questions to brainstorm ideas:*

- *Who was involved in the story?*
- *What was the situation?*
- *How did empathy play a role in the event?*
- *What emotions were involved or felt (before, during, and after) the event?*
- *What did you learn from this experience about empathy or relationships?*

## Activity:

*Brainstorm your ideas below:*

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## Step 2: Organize Your Story

*Now that you have your story in mind, use the outline below to structure your essay.*

- **Introduction:** Start by setting the scene and introducing the people involved. Briefly explain the situation and give your reader a sense of what's coming.
  - Who are the main people in your story? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the setting of your story? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How will you introduce the event that led to the moment of empathy? \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Rising Action:** Build up to the key moment of empathy by explaining what happened. Include the emotions, conversations, or actions that made the situation important.
  - What events or conversations led to the moment of empathy? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What were you thinking or feeling during these events? \_\_\_\_\_

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- **The Moment of Empathy:** Describe the key moment when empathy was shown or experienced. Be detailed—what happened and how did it make a difference?
  - What was the most important moment of empathy in your story? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How did it affect you or the other person? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What emotions were felt during the moment? \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Falling Action:** Explain what happened after the moment of empathy. How did the situation resolve or change?

- *How did the moment of empathy change things?* \_\_\_\_\_

- *What actions or conversations happened next?* \_\_\_\_\_

- **Conclusion:** Reflect on the importance of the experience. What did you learn, and how did the experience shape your understanding of empathy?

- *What did you learn from this experience?* \_\_\_\_\_

- *How did this moment of empathy impact you or the other person?* \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 3: Writing Tips

*Here are some tips to help you in writing your essay:*

- **Show, don't tell:** Be sure to use descriptive and engaging rhetoric and language. You want the reader to feel as though they are immersed in the story (i.e., instead of saying you "felt nauseous" you can say "my stomach began to churn and twist and then suddenly a sour and acrid taste entered my mouth")
- **Include Dialogue:** Make sure to include any important or pertinent pieces of dialogue in your story.
- **Use Vivid Details:** When describing situations or scenes, make sure to be as detailed as possible. This helps the reader put themselves into the narrative you are telling. (i.e., instead of saying "It was sunset when our conversation began to go south," you can say "As our conversation progressed, I noticed the sky above slowly changing from bright blue to a deep, fiery, reddish-orange. It was as if the sky itself was mimicking our moods—darkening and becoming angry.")
- **Be Reflective:** As important as it is to be descriptive, it is just as important that you discuss why the events mattered. Why were the situations and conversations important or significant?

## Step 4: Drafting Your Essay

*Now that you have worked through this worksheet, it is time to write your first draft. On a separate piece of paper, or on a computer, write up the first draft of your narrative. Refer to this worksheet to assist you in the writing process.*

## Step 5: Review and Revise

*Once you've written your draft, go back and revise it. Here are some questions to guide your revision:*

- *Does my introduction clearly set up the narrative and draw the reader in?*
- *Have I used descriptive and engaging language/rhetoric to bring my narrative to life?*
- *Is the moment of empathetic listening or the act of empathy clear and well-developed?*
- *Does my conclusion reflect on the importance of the event and what I learned?*
- *Did I check for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors?*