**Narrative Essay (15%, 750 words, dbl space)**

Emily Dickinson wrote "Tell all the Truth / But tell it slant".

Write a personal memory using one of the four topic choices and be descriptive.

**Topic Choices: {focus on a single moment in time and tell a story not summarize a series of events!}**

*If you did one of these first 7 for the paragraph, you could expand it to an essay. The others probably aren’t suited for that.*

1. Walking along an unusual beach (describe) with your dog and a metal detector, you come across something exciting. What is it and what do you do with it?
2. Bad customer service experience
3. What rule did you break the most as a child? Explain with details.
4. Strange or funny thing a child did
5. A scary moment or an embarrassing one
6. Worst day as an employee
7. A time you should have acted but did not
8.  One person’s trash is another person’s treasure. **Write about a time when you discovered something valuable that others had discarded or ignored.**
9.  The golden rule states that you should treat others as you’d like to be treated. It’d be nice if everyone followed this rule, but its been broken more than once. **Write about a time when you felt disrespected.** How did you handle it and what did you learn?
10.  Everybody has a special talent. **Write about the time when you discovered one of your talents.**
11.  It’s no fun to be in pain, but it can be worse to watch someone you love suffer. **Write about a time when you or one of your loved ones was hurt.**
12.  The world can be a cold place, but a little bit of kindness can make it a lot warmer. **Write about a time when you made the world a better place for someone by being kind.**
13.  You shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. **Write about a time when you were underestimated or when you underestimated someone else.**
14.  There’s a time for work and a time for play, but it’s a lot more fun to play. **Write about a time when you put off doing something important to have fun.** How did it work out for you in the end and what did you learn?
15.  Part of growing up is facing your fears. **Write about a time when you did something that you were afraid to do.**
16.  Our first impressions aren’t always accurate. **Write about a time when your first impression of someone or something proved to be wrong.**
17.  The world needs heroes and anyone can be one. **Write about a time when you did something heroic.** It doesn’t have to be as dramatic as saving someone’s life. It can be as simple as helping someone out when they needed it.
18.  We are all tempted to do things that we shouldn’t at times. It takes integrity to do the right thing against your baser desires. **Write about a time when you resisted the temptation to do something wrong.**
19.  Tact is the ability to phrase criticism in a sensitive way. It’s hard to be tactful all of the time. **Write about a time when you blurted out something that you immediately regretted saying.**
20.  Technology is supposed to solve our problems, but sometimes it just complicates them. **Write about a time when technology made your life more difficult.**
21.  It can be hard to fit in when you feel awkward. **Write about a time when you felt out of place.** How did you adapt to the situation?
22.  Boys and girls are treated differently at times. It’s not fair, but it happens. **Write about a time when you were treated differently because of your gender.** It can be in a way that benefited you or worked against you.
23.  You can’t run from your past. It will always find a way to catch up with you. **Write about a time when something from your past came back to haunt you.**
24.  Many people are resistant to change, even when it is good for them. **Write about a time when you grew to appreciate something that you once resisted.**
25. Analyze a moral dilemma you have faced and give the reason(s) for your final decision.
26. Using personal narrative events in your own life, discuss the ways in which an individual may let their desire to be accepted limit their freedom. Did you do something to compromise your beliefs and values to be more accepted somehow?
27. Write about a time you went above and beyond heroics. What did you do? Was it required of you to do this act or was it more impulsive? Did you succeed? Why or why not?
28. Have you ever had a goal or dream that someone close to you laughed at? Describe it and what happened between you and this person. If this never happened to you, it must have had happened to a friend! (“On the Sidelines”)
29. Has there ever been a time when either you or a friend faced a moment when someone was prejudice. Describe the moment and what happened? (“Momma, Dentist & Me”)

**DO NOT WRITE ABOUT FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL. DO NOT MAKE IT A COMPARE & CONTRAST (i.e. one town vs. another or a big move your family did)**

A narrative tells a story by using a series of events or actions in a specific sequence, not reported like the evening news. Imagine that you are watching it unfold before you in your head as you are writing your narrative scene. Choose details that will dramatize the development of the story and forget the insignificant ones. It might be better to stick to a single moment in time, rather than trying to tie a bunch of events at a series of locations together as is done in a novel or a movie. The purpose of a storyline in an essay is to support the thesis of the essay by telling of an experience that makes the point better than just listing facts!

* Think about what can be learned from your story? What change happened in the life of the writer because of the personal experience?
* Who is your audience (it should be more than just “some stupid teacher in order to get an A”!)?
* Do not forget that the business of the essay is to make a ***point***. Do not leave the reader wondering SO WHAT? You can accomplish this through a good thesis and in the conclusion. It is easy to get caught up in your own story and forget there is a purpose, an intended audience, and a reason why you are telling this particular story in the first place!
* Does the thesis inspire a reasonable reader to want to know more, to ask “How?” or “Why?”
* In the final paragraph of the essay, did you reflect as the writer of the essay on the larger meaning or importance of the experience described. This is the point of the story that basically explains why the author is bothering to write this in the first place (beside because my teacher made me do this!).
* The writing in an essay should be lively and interesting. Try to engage the reader's interest by adding details or personal observations. Sharing personal thoughts and details invites the reader into author's world and makes the story more personal and more interesting.



**Review of Action Verbs** (from Adding Spices to The Mix xerox): “To Run Fast” is a verb (to run) and an adverb (fast) that lets the reader know someone is running. While that meets the requirements of description, how could it be improved? Consider instead of the ho-hum plain-Jane verb “run”, try using a more accurate verb like “sprint” (running fast over a short distance), “lope” (running fast for a long distance), “gallop” (running with long strides), and so on. Remember to stay away from the passive if at all possible. Choice (a): The horse is running fast to the barn / Choice (b): The horse gallops to the barn without warning.

**How to come up with a thesis sentence for a narrative descriptive paper?**

You could first write your subject matter into the form of a question and then use the rest of the essay to answer it. For example, you want to tell a story about Fido:

How is it possible to learn valuable life lessons from a creature who cannot speak or write?

Then come up with some examples that show this in story form. Pick the example that is the strongest, most vivid, and does the best job answering the question you posed above.

Finally, this should lead you a statement that will be the subject of the entire paper:

It seems impossible to learn valuable life lessons from a hairy creature with no ability to read, speak, or write.

While good, how can the thesis sentence be kicked up a notch with a few more descriptive words? How can the thesis be turned into something great that adds to the “learning a valuable lesson” theme?

On the surface it seems impossible to learn valuable life lessons from a hairy creature with no ability to read, speak, or write, but beneath the dusty fur and tennis ball breath resides one of life's greatest teachers , my dog Max.

...and then the rest of the essay naturally addresses the lessons you feel you learned/gained from the relationship.

**What the #$@% does this teacher mean by show not tell?**

Telling = When I was four, maybe less, my first memory is a moment when my mom and dad were fighting about pup u platters. I was watching and felt helpless.

Showing = “Karen, I’m home!” Dad said loudly.

“Good, I am starving! What did you bring home for supper?” Mom asked, walking to the gray foyer.

“Pu-pu platter,” Dad said with a smirk, taking off his coat. Mom looked inside the Chinese take-out bag. She frowned and scrunched her nose. “What is it?”

“How should I know?” Dad yelled.

“Well, you should know what you’re eating!” Mom screamed back in frustration. From then on, it was like tennis, with a scream being used as the ball. I emerged from my room with my Mickey Mouse doll and my blue blanket, sucking my thumb. I simply stood in the shadows doing nothing.