

# Introduction

Writing is a way to communicate and learn. When you write, your mind has to sort through many ideas and impressions to choose the words and writing style that will best convey your message. There are many different types of writing, just as there are many reasons to write.

Throughout this book, four main writing styles will be discussed: *narrative writing*, *descriptive writing*, *expository writing*, and *persuasive writing*. Reading and writing go hand in hand, and you will read models that show how others have expressed themselves. These examples will provide guidelines for your writing.

## Kinds of Writing

There are four main kinds of writing: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive.

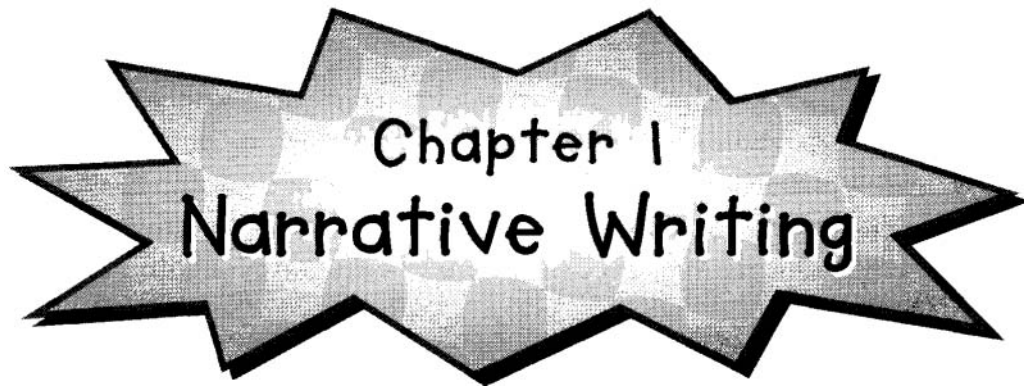
- *Narrative writing* includes fictional and nonfiction stories, and personal histories. Examples are fairy tales, biographies, and newspaper stories.
- *Descriptive writing* focuses on describing a person, place, or thing, using the five senses. Poems can be examples of descriptive writing.
- *Expository writing* is meant to show something new to your audience. Information reports and paragraph summaries are examples of expository writing. Lists and directions are also expository writing.
- *Persuasive writing* means trying to convince someone of something as a result of your writing. Letters to the editor and advertisements are two types of persuasive writing.

## Reasons for Writing

One purpose of writing can be *narrative*, which means your writing tells the story of something or someone real or imaginary.

Another reason to write is to *describe* something for someone else—your reader. Much of what we write is descriptive. Descriptive writing paints a mental picture for the reader.

The purpose of writing can also be *expository*, giving information about a topic like a period in history, a scientific discovery, or a significant individual. In school, you are often asked to write *summaries* in your own words, to help you absorb and learn what you have read.



# Chapter 1 Narrative Writing

Let's begin with *narrative* writing. A narrative tells a story made up of events that flow together to form a beginning, middle, and end. It is usually composed of many paragraphs. Common types of narratives are *fictional* (made-up) stories, *personal narratives*, and *nonfiction* stories.

## Reviewing Story Elements

In *Just Write 1* and *Just Write 2*, you practiced working with the three basic elements of a narrative story.

- **character:** The character or characters do the action in the story. The characters don't have to be people; they can be animals or objects.
- **setting:** The setting tells where and when the story takes place.
- **plot:** The plot is the action of the story. It is often based on a central problem that has to be solved. The *plot line* is like a map; it shows the main events of the story rising to a climax and then coming down to a resolution or conclusion.

## Fictional Stories

Fictional stories are made up by the author. Authors use their imaginations to tell stories about interesting characters, settings, and plots.

Read the story on the next page.

## A Rainy Day

It was a rainy Sunday in September. Ten-year-old Lina and her little cousin Max were stuck inside. They watched sadly as raindrops dripped down the outside of the windowpanes. Lina and Max were supposed to go to the country fair, but the rain kept them home and indoors.

"I'm bored," whined Max after five minutes. He was seven years old and loved to ride his bike and play outside. "There's nothing to do!"

Lina sighed. They were spending the whole afternoon together, and she knew what Max could be like when he was grumpy. "Let's ask my parents for ideas," Lina suggested.

Lina's parents were reading a newspaper in the living room. "We don't have anything to do," Lina and Max complained.

"Why don't you straighten up your room?" said Lina's mother, smiling.

"No..." they both said.

"Why don't you wash the breakfast dishes?" suggested Lina's father, laughing.

"No!" said Lina and Max.

"Then use your imaginations," Lina's mother said.

Lina and Max went back to the playroom. "I've got it!" said Lina. "Let's write a book!" She sat down at her desk and pulled out some paper, a pen, and colored pencils. "Let's think of a good story. I'll write, and you can draw the pictures," she said.

Max sat down beside her. "Can we write a story about the country fair?" he sniffed.

"Yes, let's write about what we would have seen if we'd been able to go."

"Can I pretend we ran into space aliens there?" asked Max.

"Sure," said Lina, giggling. "Mom told us to use our imaginations!"

Lina and Max passed the afternoon working on their story. After writing the last sentence, Lina read the story out loud. Together, they revised the parts they didn't like or that didn't make sense. Then, they bound the book using some yarn and glue, and took it to the living room to show Lina's parents.

When Max's family came to pick him up later that afternoon, his smile was as bright as the sun that had just come out. "We wrote a book," he said proudly, "and Lina's going to help me write another one the next time there's a rainy day!"



## Reading Response

Can you identify the main elements of the story? Fill in the boxes below. You do not need to write in complete sentences.

**Characters**

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**Setting**

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**Plot**

problem? 

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events? 

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## Dialogue

*Dialogue* is the talking that takes place between the characters in a story. Having dialogue in your story helps bring your characters to life. Dialogue is also a way to get your story moving from one event to the next.

## Changing Paragraphs for a New Speaker

When people are having a conversation or dialogue, a new speaker begins a new paragraph. This helps readers keep track of who is speaking and what each person is saying. Turn back to *A Rainy Day*. Notice that the paragraphs change each time a different person speaks.



For review exercises and practice with changing paragraphs for a new speaker and punctuating dialogue, turn to page 78.



When punctuating dialogue:

- Put quotation marks before the first word spoken and after the last word spoken.
- Use commas to separate spoken words from the speaker.
- Capitalize the first word after the quotation mark at the beginning of a sentence.
- If the quotation is interrupted midsentence, the first letter of the second clause is lowercase.
- Punctuation marks go inside the quotation marks.



Don't forget to indent every new paragraph.

### Exercise Using Dialogue

Write a brief five-line dialogue between two people. For example, you might invent a scene where two people are discussing homework or making plans for the weekend. Or, feel free to create your own imaginative scene.

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### ✓ Editing Checklist ✓

- Did you start a new paragraph every time the speaker changed?
- Is all of your punctuation within the quotation marks?
- Did you remember to capitalize the first words of the sentences and use lowercase if a sentence is continuing?