Prewrite a Personal Narrative

1. Focus (15 MINUTES)

Refer to the class Personal Narratives anchor chart and review it with students. Remind students what the elements of character, setting, problem, and resolution are.

Display page 5 of Personal Narratives using the big book or interactive whiteboard resources. Reread the Sample Problems web. Say: Today I’m going to prewrite, or plan, a new personal narrative. I will choose another sample problem to write about. This time I’ll write about starting at a new school.

Display a copy of the Personal Narratives graphic organizer (BLM 1) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Say: I can use a graphic organizer like this one to organize my ideas for writing a personal narrative. I sketch what happened at the beginning of my story in the “Beginning” box, what happened in the middle in the “Middle” box, and what happened in the end in the “End” box.

Tell about an experience such as going to a new school and sketch each part. Say: When I was seven, my family moved to a new town and I had to start a new school. The only person I knew there was my older cousin, so I was kind of scared. I’ll sketch me standing in front of my new school looking scared in the “Beginning” box. I’ll be by myself because I don’t have any friends yet. My cousin introduced me to some of his friends. I’ll show this in the “Middle” box. Then I made new friends of my own, and I became happy at my new school. I’ll show me and my friends in the last box. I’ll have a big smile on my face.

Model checking that you have all the features of a personal narrative. Point to each box as you identify characters, a setting, a problem, and a resolution.
**Say:** Strong writers think about what they will say before they start to write. If you are ready to begin a new personal narrative, you can organize your ideas about your experience starting school, or you can plan to write about a different experience that was important to you. Draw and/or write about the beginning, middle, and end of your personal narrative to help you organize your ideas.

**NOTE:** Save the graphic organizer to use again in the next lesson.

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**2. Rehearse (5 minutes)**

Ask students to turn to their partners. **Say:** Tell your partner what you will work on today. If you are starting a new personal narrative, tell the beginning, middle, and end of your story. Then see if your partner can name the characters, setting, problem, and resolution. Move among the pairs of students to monitor and support their efforts.

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**3. Independent Writing and Conferring (20 minutes)**

Distribute students’ writing folders and give each student who is ready to prewrite a copy of BLM 1. Students will need to keep their graphic organizers to use in future lessons when they write their narratives. **Say:** Draw what happened at the beginning of your story in the first box. Draw what happened in the middle of your story in the middle box. Draw what happened at the end of your story in the last box. You can also write words in each box to tell what happened.

Use the Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to help you provide differentiated support to individual students based on your observations. As students finish, ask them to check to make sure they have included all the parts of a personal narrative. **Say:** Point to the characters in your drawing. Point to the setting. Point to the problem. Point to the resolution. You can also write your ideas in words.

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**4. Share (5 minutes)**

Invite two or three students to share their completed graphic organizers. Point out and celebrate examples of characters, settings, problems, and resolutions.

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**Sample Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers**

**Goal Oriented**
- I will close my eyes and think of something that happened to me.
- I will draw the beginning, middle, and end of my personal narrative.

**Directive and Corrective Feedback**
- Tell me about starting at a new school. Who was there? What was the problem? What was the resolution?

**Self-Monitoring and Reflection**
- What have you drawn so far? What will you draw next?
- Is this what happened at the beginning? Tell me about it.
- Does your last drawing show how your problem was solved?

**Validating and Confirming**
- I can picture your characters and setting because of the way you wrote about them.
- You drew the problem and resolution!
- Your drawings show what happened when you started at a new school. That will help you when you’re ready to write.

**Teacher Tip**

If you have students who need help generating ideas for a personal narrative, work with them to develop a picture time line of meaningful events they remember in their lives. Encourage them to refer to this time line throughout the unit for inspiration.