



**BECAUSE WRITING MATTERS**

**MY Access! Writer's Workshop**  
**High School Narrative Writing**  
**Prompt: A Lesson Learned**

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## **Notes:**

## **A Lesson Learned**

Each person has been in trouble at one time or another because he or she did something bad or said something wrong. Write a multi-paragraph narrative describing an instance when you did something you later regretted and the lesson you learned in the process.

As you write, remember your story will be scored based on how well you:

- develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates the purpose of your story to the audience.
- describe the characters, setting, and conflict using meaningful sensory descriptions and details that enable the reader to visualize the experiences in your narrative.
- organize your story in a clear and logical manner, including a beginning, middle and end.
- use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

# MY Access! “A Lesson Learned” Teaching Ideas

## Prewriting

*Preparation: Draw the following T-Chart on the board or in Word:*

Lessons Learned	Why?

- Begin by reading the prompt as a whole class.
- As a whole class, read “Life’s Lessons I’ve Learned the Hard Way” and/or “ABCs of Life’s Little Lessons.”
- Have students draw the T-Chart above on a piece of blank paper or distribute handout on page 7.
- Give students several minutes to list the lessons they have learned on the left side of the T-chart. As students write, complete your own list of special days on the board or in Word.
- Share your list with students. Instruct students to add any new ideas to their personal list if something you shared triggers a memory.
- Have students share with a partner and continue to add to their lists. Remind them that the purpose of this activity is to get as many ideas down as possible.
- Share as a whole class:
  - As students share, teacher fills out the left side of the T-chart. After memories are shared, ask students to tell you WHY—what made these days so special? Fill out the right side.
  - Discuss the importance of the “why.” This is going to help students find the purpose of their story.
- Have students fill out the right side of their personal T-Chart.
- Have them look at their T-Chart and put a star next to their top THREE “lessons learned.”

## Beginning to Draft

- Initially, simply have students do a “quickwrite” for 8-10 minutes about one of their starred ideas on the T-chart. Have them write as quickly as possible without stopping to think—they just need to get their ideas down. Tell them not to worry about grammar or spelling. If they run out of ideas on one topic, they should choose another starred idea and begin writing about that.

## Narrowing Focus, Revising and Reflecting

- After students get something down on paper, have them try “looping” as described on page 8 as a way to narrow their focus.
- As students are writing, use pages 9-15 to teach the features of a strong narrative.
- Use the “Plotting a Narrative” on page 16 to help students add conflict and a climax to their stories.
- As students are writing, use the “MY Access! Writing Domains” handout on page 18 to break down the MY Access! rubric. Students can read the description of each writing domain on the rubric, and then put it into language they understand. You may have to guide this activity.
- After students understand the rubric, have them use it to score and discuss the student samples provided on pages 13-15. They can also refer back to the “Features of a Strong Narrative” handout on page 9.
- After students submit their first draft, complete the “Understanding and Applying MY Tutor Feedback Group Assignment” on pages 19-22 to prepare them for revision.
- Page 34 has a sample Revision Plan (a tab located in “My Writing Space”). Students should complete a Revision Plan after each draft.
- Page 35 has guidelines for peer response. After every peer response session, be sure students fill out another “Revision Plan.” Page 36 provides students with questions to guide them in their reflection about how the peer response session went.

## ***Life lessons I've Learned the Hard Way***

When a trampoline says Max Weight: 150lbs, don't tempt fate.

When diving from Stoneman bridge during a drought, you can't really do 'the flip' that fast.

It is never a good idea to say 'I told you so' to your parents.

Just because spaghetti and Maruchan™ soup are both good, combining them will not necessarily result in something good.

If your mother's pet bird chews on mouse cables, don't convince her to upgrade to USB.

A superman cape does not make you less likely to break your leg when you jump from the roof.

Never tease a water moccasin, a bull or an officer of the law.

Buying a pre-made extension cord is almost always cheaper than a trip to the emergency room.

Never let the toilet seat get loose. Ever.

Backups are not optional.

Soap in a fountain is funny. Jello mix is not.

Do not taunt pigeons around old ladies.

The phrase 'heads up' usually means 'duck.'

Objects in mirror **ARE** closer than they appear.

Do not use a cup of white gas to start a campfire.

If the stick bends, it will not burn.

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## ABC'S OF "LIFE'S LITTLE LESSONS"

*Almost everything you need to know about life ... on one page.*

- A** Always be yourself. After all, no one can change you, unless you want them to.
- B** Be ready for anything to happen at any given time. Yes, being flexible is a very good sign.
- C** Crying isn't a crime, just don't do it all the time.
- D** Don't give up on your dreams, not by any means.
- E** Everyone must make "hard-work" choices, and not simply listen to others' voices.
- F** Friends should help you to like who you are, even if you're not a Hollywood star.
- G** Give smiles, and get them, too, for love is important to me and to you.
- H** Happiness is our primary driving force, but if we don't achieve it, we'll experience great remorse.
- I** Invest in yourself, and in your education. If you do, you'll experience great elation.
- J** Jumping to conclusions is not the thing to do, for as you do so, you'll likely break the "golden rule."
- K** Keep an eye on your friends, the other eye on your enemies, in order to gain greater insight.
- L** Learning from our mistakes is best, if we want to do better than the rest.
- M** Make the most out of life as you seek to avoid all the strife.
- N** Never blame others for what you've done, for to do so can make you feel dumb.
- O** Overcoming life's obstacles are what you want to do, throughout this life, and maybe the next one too.
- P** People know that beauty is skin deep, but spend a fortune on it, never saying a peep.
- Q** Quit complaining, it never works, and after a while, people think you're a jerk.

**R** Relaxation is stress-reducing, and at work, keeps everyone producing.

**S** Strive to see others' point of view, for in so doing, they'll think more of you.

**T** The only person that can stop you is you. So don't be a fool, go back to school.

**U** Undoing mistakes is impossible to do, so just see in the now, and don't be a fool.

**V** Very often life gives you chances for great romances, so stay on your toes, and go to many dances.

**W** Welcome changes, for life is good, and be sure that you always do what you should.

**X** eXpect the best and make things go, for the alternative is a big black hole.

**Y** You are the one in charge of fun, so don't quit now, just get the job done.

**Z** Zzzz's are important for me and you, otherwise, our fatigue would generally rule.

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**Lessons Learned**

**Why?**



# LOOPING

*Looping is an exercise many writers use to narrow the focus of a piece. Often, in early drafts we write anything and everything that comes to mind about our topic (and this is okay!). As we revise, we want to “zoom in” on only the most important and interesting parts of our narrative. We need to discover our PURPOSE for writing.*

**Tell Students:**

**Step 1:** Re-read your entire piece.

**Step 2:** Choose one line that stands out to you. Maybe it is an extremely important moment in your story, maybe it is the most exciting point, or maybe you just like the idea you are trying to express.

**Step 3:** Underline or highlight that line.

**Step 4:** On a blank piece of paper, write ONLY that line at the top of the paper.

**Step 5:** Now, for next ten minutes, write as QUICKLY as you can about only that line.

**Step 6:** Think about what happened. Do you like what you just wrote more than your first draft? If so, you now have a NEW and more specific focus for your story. At the very least, one part of your story has been “exploded.”



# Narrative Texts: Telling a Story

## Characteristics of a Narrative:

- Narrates (tells) a sequence of events and scenes with sensory details
- Develops plot and character
- Has rising action and conflict that leads to a climax
- Can be in 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person point-of-view

## Purpose of a Narrative:

- To entertain and relate an event within a time sequence
- Can (but not always) share personal reflections or express thoughts and feelings

## Types of Narrative:

- Novels
- Short stories
- First person autobiographical incident
- Personal memoir or essay
- Myths, legends, folk tales, fairy tales, tall tales
- Epic poems

## Features of a Narrative:

- **Setting:** Where and when the story takes place
- **Characters:** Described in detail so reader knows not only what they look like, but also what they think, say, feel, etc.
- **Plot:** What happens—the sequence of events. Strong plots have the following elements:
  - **Conflict:** moments that create suspense or anticipation for the reader. Conflict doesn't always have to be dramatic or scary (even happy stories have conflict).
  - **Climax:** The turning point of the story—the point where the greatest emotional involvement for the reader takes place.
  - **Resolution:** The final outcome of the story. It doesn't have to be happy, but it should give the reader some sense of closure.

## Using the MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline to Teach the Elements of a Narrative

1. Distribute the following materials to your students:
  - A professional or student narrative text
  - A hard copy of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*
  - A marker, crayon or highlighter
2. Place students in groups of four. Give each student in the group a different colored marker/highlighter and assign each student an “expert” role.
  - Student 1 will read the text and highlight only the **setting**.
  - Student 2 will read the text and highlight details about the **characters**—physical descriptions as well as anything they do, say, or think.
  - Student 3 will read the text and highlight only the **conflicts** they see in the story.
  - Student 4 will read the text and highlight the **climax** and the **resolution**.
3. Read the story as a whole class. Each student is to highlight his or her “expert” area as you read. After, discuss the various elements and how/why they worked. For example, why were the character descriptions important? What did you see the characters doing? What did the setting add to the story? How did the author make the climax exciting?

### An Extension of This Activity

This activity can also be used as a form of peer response. This time, however, students in the group will bring their own narratives. They will read the first narrative, and each student will highlight his or her area of expertise. Then, have students pass to the right and read the second narrative doing the same thing. They should also write any questions they have in the appropriate section of the *MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline*. When students get their own narrative back, have them check to make sure they have all colors highlighted. If not, time to revise!

## MY Access! Narrative Topic Outline

**Setting:** Where and when does your story take place? Describe your locations in detail.

**Characters:** Who is in your story? Describe these people in detail. For example, what do they look like? What do they say that is important (dialogue)? What are they feeling?

**Plot:** What happens in your story? Create pictures for your reader to see, hear, and feel by using a great amount of detail in every scene you describe. **Show**, don't tell.

**Conflict:** A good story has to create suspense, anticipation, or a sense of wonder for your reader; otherwise, why would your reader keep reading? Even if your story is about a happy time in your life, remember to include something that will arouse your readers' emotions and make them excited about what will happen. Show your reaction to the conflict.

**Climax:** What is the turning point of your story—the point where you have your readers' greatest interest and greatest emotional involvement in your story?

**Resolution:** What is the final outcome of your story?

**Introducing your story:** How will you begin your story so that your readers will get really excited about reading on?

The following are some suggestions.

**Dialogue**—“It’s perfectly clear why she wants it,” said Marge, as she cut through the store, making sure she would beat out Jessica.

**A flashback**—Erin was a hundred yards from the finish line and knew she shouldn’t look back. The problem was that she couldn’t help herself.

**A startling statement**—My town of Newbridge was a village of fools, fools young and old.

**A puzzling statement**—Across the street lived old Johnson, blind as a bat, but kept my house safe from the zombies who visited every night.

**A description of your main character and your setting**—Erica pulled back her hair and put on her glasses. Now that she was running for class president, she wanted to look the part.

**Putting your story in order:** How will you tell your story? Will you start from the beginning and describe each scene until you get to the end? Or will you start at the end of your story to create interest and then after the first paragraph begin at the beginning?

Most importantly, make an outline of what happens in each scene of your story in the order that it happened before you begin writing. Then follow the sequence of events when you write your story. Otherwise, you can confuse your reader about what is happening.

Words and phrases that can substitute (synonyms) for “then”

All of a sudden,	Suddenly,	At that moment,
Just then,	Meanwhile,	All at once,
In a few hours,	The next day,	After that,
At that time,	Afterward,	Without warning,
Unfortunately,	Surprisingly,	Next,
Amazingly,	To my surprise,	Unexpectedly,
At that point,	In the meantime,	For the time being,
Later,	After that,	Sadly,

## Elements of a Strong Narrative

- Directions:** Read Sara's story. Based on our discussion that centered on the elements necessary for writing a good story, is this a strong story that will appeal to a reader? Does it have conflict? A climax and resolution?

### Sara's Story:

Mom always says, "Don't play ball in the house!". Well, I have learned my lesson and I will never play with a ball in my house again.

It was seven years ago, when I was eight years old, my little brother Elliot and I were playing with a ball in our living room, the nicest room in the house when I threw the ball to Elliot the ball hit my moms favorite lamp. Time seemed to slow down as it was falling.

"Crash!", was the dreaded sound it made when it hit the floor. My brother and I ran as fast as we could so we would not get in trouble. My mom didn't find out until the next day when she walked into the living room and starred at the shattered lamp on the floor, ruined beyond repair. She found out that I did it and was upset with me and sent me to my room. I was so sad that I had broken her most precious possession and that she had gotten mad at me for what I had done and then did not tell her.

I learned a lesson that day that if you do something wrong, tell someone right away because it will only be worse if they find out you did not tell. From then on I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

Comments:

- Directions:** Read the following stories. Based on our discussion that centered on the elements necessary for writing a good story, are these strong stories that will appeal to a reader? Use the rubric to score each story, and then give the writer feedback.

### Kristine's Story:

It was a brisk summer afternoon and I was home alone. The phone rang it was my best friend Emily on the phone. She asked me if i would like to go to Courtney's house. Courtney was a grade below us. I said I'd have to call and ask my mom first and that I'd call her back for the answer. I called my mom.

I said " Hey mom, is it okay if Emily and I go to Courtney's."

My mom replied " Yes but, make sure Emily meets you half way i don't want you walking alone, oh and turn on the alarm."

"I don't know how, how do you do it?" I questioned her.

" Never mind then I'll teach you later just don't touch the alarm since you don't know how to work it, and just shut and lock the door and bring a spare key." she told me.

I agreed and hung up the phone and called Emily back " hey Em, I'm aloud to go over, but can you meet my at my house, so I don't walk alone." I said to her.

" Sure, I'll be right over." she said back. I get out of my pajamas get dressed and go down stairs awaiting her arrival.

Knock Knock Knock, It was Emily. I answered it and let her in. "I just have to get a key and lock up the house." I said "okay" she replied. We were about to leave and I passed the alarm, it looked so tempting to touch, and turning on the alarm would make me look so smart and mature. I think I'll show off I thought. "wait I need to turn on the alarm." I said sounding so above myself.

"okay but, hurry up." Emily said not impressed. I pushed some random button that looked like it could be to turn on the alarm, then I ran out shut and locked the door.

When we go to Courtney's she opened the door, we went in and went into her living room and played with all her thousands of stuffed animals, then we went upstairs and went on her computer and played barbie dream make over. It was a game I always wanted but, never had cause it wouldn't go on the type of computer we had. So I was super happy we got to play the game. Half way into the game we were laughing and hyper and loud we were being typical young girls.

" Emma, someone's here to see you." Courtney's mom called up to us.

"huh, whose here to see me." I said kind of shocked. "

"Emma, you need to come home now, the ambulance and all these hospital workers are over your house, the alarm went off, they think It was your dog who jumped up and must have hit It." my two next door neighbors Celine and Jason awared me. I was in awe, I knew It was me but I wasnt gunna tell anyone.

"oh my gosh." I shut the door and went back upstairs shocked at what happened, I'm dead. Emily was trying to calm me down saying that my mom wouldn't care and that she'd understand, but I had a hard time believing that. She calmed me down.

Courtneys mom yelled up that my mom was on the phone. I grabed It and instenly clicked the on button. "Hello?" I said in a confused shy manor.

"Emma I'm coming to get you right now, bye." My mom said, I wasnt sure if she was mad or not. I thought oh man I'm gunna be grounded for this one. My mom comes to pick me up, my sister was in the car. I got in the car and my mom and sister lectured me on my wrong doing and my mom got pretty mad at me cause she told me not to turn it on, and one of the helpers almost broke a run trying to climb into the window to see if anyone was hurt. My next door neighbors thought my mom had another heart attack and when I talked to her before I blamed it on the dog and lied to her.

That night everything was cooled down, I wasnt grounded, my mom was mad but she forgave me and told me never to do it again, and when i had to talk to my dad on the phone, cause he was away on business he sounded fine and didn't care as much as I thought he would. I did something wrong, I learned of my wrong doing and got lectured and went on with my life and never touched something I didn't know how to work again. You could say I learned my lesson,

though it was scary and a shock I got through it and it went through my mind. I will never forget this story.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Megan's Story:**

One day in Home ec. we were all learning how to sew duffel bags. There were many steps, and precautions involved in making the bag. Mrs. Tanaglea was going over some of the rules and teaching us how to use certain things.

She then came to the fabric cutter. She told us that when using the tool to make sure that we used the special glove so that if we got cut it wouldn't damage the skin. When it was my turn to use the fabric cutter i lined up my fabric, put the measuring stick in place and put on my glove. I then noticed that the fabric wasn't aligned, so i took off the glove, and lined it up. I picked up the fabric cutter, forgetting to put my glove back on, place it on the fabric, pressed down hard and rolled down the line. I wasn't paying attention and didn't know my finger was hanging off the side of the measuring stick and i rolled right over it.

I didn't quite know what happened to my finger but i quick dropped the cutter and help my finger tight in my other hand. I went over to Mrs. Tanaglea and told her what had happened. She was a little disappointed in me but more concerned about what happened. She took a look at my finger and gasped she ran me over to the sink and put it under cold water, wrapped it in a towel, and got someone to take me to the nurse.

I thought she was making a big deal out of what had happened because it was just a cut. When we got to the nurse, she sat me down and carefully un wrapped my finger from the towel. I then saw what had really happened to my finger for the first time. She told me I had cut off a little bit of the corner of my finger.

After i realized what happened i started to cry. She then put neosporin on it, wrapped it up and began to call my mom so she could take me to the hospital. She didn't answer her cell phone so we then called my dad. Still no one answered. After some time passed she said if i couldn't get a ride i would have to take an ambulance to get to the hospital. About 5 minutes later my mom finally called back. She came to my school as fast as she could and she took me to Saint Mary's Hospital.

The wait was about an hour long, i was in a lot of pain, and the towel they gave me for my finger started to get too wet. When the doctor finally took me in, he said that I might need stitches, but he could also just wrap it up in what they called a "dress" I chose the dress because i figured it would be less painful. He put some more medicine on my finger, a little sponge over the cut, and wrapped my whole finger up in gaws.

After a while it was hard for me to do other things. I had trouble typing, getting dressed, and i wasn't allowed to sew until my finger healed. I learned a lesson to always follow directions because they're really important.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_





### MY Access! 6-Point Narrative Writing Rubric

	Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
	The extent to which the response establishes and maintains a controlling idea (or central idea), an understanding of purpose and audience, and completion of the task.	The extent to which the response develops ideas fully and creatively using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details ( <i>plot, setting, characters, conflict, dialogue</i> ).	The extent to which the response demonstrates a unified structure, direction, and unity, paragraphing and transitional devices.	The extent to which response demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice and usage.	The extent the response demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6	<b>Very effective Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>thorough</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	<b>Very Effective Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>thoroughly</i> detailed and developed plot and setting. Creates complex characters. Clearly establishes tension/conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used very effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Very Effective Organization.</b> Captures the reader's attention by cleverly opening the story. Story flows very smoothly because of excellent transitions that support sequential development. Has a conclusion that pulls the entire story together.	<b>Very Effective Language Use and Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>precise</i> language and word choice, a <i>defined</i> voice, and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured and varied</i> sentences.	<b>Very Effective control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few or no errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling.
5	<b>Good Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are all relevant to the story.	<b>Good Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>well-developed</i> plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/ conflict/problem that heightens the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used effectively to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Good Organization.</b> Opening of story excites readers' to continue reading. Story flows smoothly from one event to another with effective transitions that support sequential development. Conclusion provides reader with a sense of completeness.	<b>Good Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with <i>some evidence</i> of voice and a <i>clear</i> sense of audience; uses <i>well-structured</i> sentences with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Good control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not interfere with the message</i> .
4	<b>Adequate Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>basic</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that are relevant to the story.	<b>Adequate Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>reasonably</i> developed plot and setting. Creates believable characters. Establishes tension/ conflict/problem that holds the reader's suspense for what will happen in the story. Dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Adequate Organization.</b> Provides an interesting opening to the story that keeps the reader reading. Story generally flows smoothly from one event to another with transitions to support sequential development.	<b>Adequate Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate</i> language and word choice, with an <i>awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; generally uses correct sentence structure with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Adequate control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> Some errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that <i>do not significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
3	<b>Limited Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>limited</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may not be relevant to the story.	<b>Limited Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides an <i>adequately</i> developed plot, setting and characters, but lacks sufficient detail to make this more than a summary of what happens in the story. Tension/ conflict or a problem may be stated, but not developed. Some dialogue may be used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Limited Organization.</b> Provides an adequate opening that may not hold the reader's attention. The flow of the story may be broken by haps in time and sequence. Transitions may be weak. Provides the reader with some sense of closure.	<b>Limited Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>simple</i> language and word choice, <i>some awareness</i> of audience and control of voice; relies on <i>simple</i> sentences with <i>insufficient</i> sentence variety and word choice.	<b>Limited control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Several noticeable</i> errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that may <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
2	<b>Minimal Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates a <i>minimal</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides description and details that may stray from the point of the story.	<b>Minimal Content &amp; Development.</b> Provides a <i>minimally</i> developed plot and setting. Characters are only described rather than developed. Narrative may include details or information that detracts from the story. Lacks tension or conflict to make the story interesting. Little dialogue is used to reveal characters' thoughts.	<b>Minimal Organization.</b> Provides an opening that may repeat the title of the prompt. Flow of story may be difficult to follow because of gaps in time and sequence. Demonstrates little evidence of a conclusion.	<b>Minimal Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>poor</i> language and word choice, with <i>little awareness</i> of audience; makes <i>basic errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	<b>Minimal control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Patterns of errors</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that substantially <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
1	<b>Inadequate or no Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Demonstrates <i>almost no</i> understanding of the purpose, audience and task. Provides very little detail, some of which may not be relevant to the story.	<b>Inadequate or no Content &amp; Development.</b> <i>Lacks</i> an identifiable plot and setting. Characters are introduced but not developed. Lack of tension or conflict makes the story uninteresting to follow. Not much happens.	<b>Inadequate or no Organization.</b> May have an opening that does no more than repeats the title of the prompt. Story lacks basic organization (beginning, middle and end) with serious gaps in sequencing of brief ideas.	<b>Inadequate Language Use &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>unclear or incoherent</i> language and word choice, <i>no</i> awareness of audience, and <i>major errors</i> in sentence structure and usage.	<b>Inadequate or no control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Errors so severe</i> in grammar, mechanics, punctuation and spelling that they <i>significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.

## MY Access! Writing Domains

Type of Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Your writing will be evaluated on the basis of five domains or trains of writing. Study each domain on the rubric and USE BULLET POINTS to take notes so that you can define each one. The feedback you receive will use the language on this chart.

Focus & Meaning	Content & Development	Organization	Language Use & Style	Mechanics & Conventions
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Piece is paragraphed</li> <li>● Grammar errors do not interfere with the message</li> <li>● Uses proper punctuation</li> <li>● Excellent spelling</li> </ul>

# Understanding and Applying MY Tutor Feedback Group Assignment

**Group Members:**

**Writing Domain: Focus and Meaning**

## **Instructions:**

**Step 1:** Read Sara's story and decide as a group how you would score it.

**Step 2:** Carefully read the MY Tutor feedback attached to this handout and follow the MY Tutor instructions. You can highlight directly on this paper.

**Step 3:** Discuss how Sara can revise the ***Focus and Meaning*** portion of her piece. Then, on a separate piece of paper each group member needs to INDIVIDUALLY revise a portion of this story. You only need to make changes related to Sara's ***Focus and Meaning***. Be prepared to share your revision!

## **Sara's Story**

Mom always says, "Don't play ball in the house!". Well, I have learned my lesson and I will never play with a ball in my house again.

It was seven years ago, when I was eight years old, my little brother Elliot and I were playing with a ball in our living room, the nicest room in the house when I threw the ball to Elliot the ball hit my moms favorite lamp. Time seamed to slow down as it was falling.

"Crash!", was the dreaded sound it made when it hit the floor. My brother and I ran as fast as we could so we would not get in trouble. My mom didn't find out until the next day when she walked into the living room and starred at the shattered lamp on the floor, ruined beyond repair. She found out that I did it and was upset with me and sent me to my room. I was so sad that I had broken her most precious possession and that she had gotten mad at me for what I had done and then did not tell her.

I learned a lesson that day that if you do something wrong, tell someone right away because it will only be worse if they find out you did not tell. From then I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

on I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

# Understanding and Applying MY Tutor Feedback Group Assignment

**Group Members:**

**Writing Domain: Content and Development**

## Instructions:

**Step 1:** Read Sara's story and decide as a group how you would score it.

**Step 2:** Carefully read the MY Tutor feedback attached to this handout and follow the MY Tutor instructions. You can highlight directly on this paper.

**Step 3:** Discuss how Sara can revise the **Content and Development** portion of her piece. Then, on a separate piece of paper each group member needs to INDIVIDUALLY revise a portion of this story. You only need to make changes related to Sara's **Content and Development**. Be prepared to share your revision!

## **Sara's story:**

Mom always says, "Don't play ball in the house!". Well, I have learned my lesson and I will never play with a ball in my house again.

It was seven years ago, when I was eight years old, my little brother Elliot and I were playing with a ball in our living room, the nicest room in the house when I threw the ball to Elliot the ball hit my moms favorite lamp. Time seamed to slow down as it was falling.

"Crash!", was the dreaded sound it made when it hit the floor. My brother and I ran as fast as we could so we would not get in trouble. My mom didn't find out until the next day when she walked into the living room and starred at the shattered lamp on the floor, ruined beyond repair. She found out that I did it and was upset with me and sent me to my room. I was so sad that I had broken her most precious possession and that she had gotten mad at me for what I had done and then did not tell her.

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# Understanding and Applying MY Tutor Feedback Group Assignment

**Group Members:**

**Writing Domain: Organization**

## **Instructions:**

**Step 1:** Read Sara's story and decide as a group how you would score it.

**Step 2:** Carefully read the MY Tutor feedback attached to this handout and follow the MY Tutor instructions. You can highlight directly on this paper.

**Step 3:** Discuss how Sara can revise the **Organization** portion of her piece. Then, on a separate piece of paper each group member needs to INDIVIDUALLY revise a portion of this story. You only need to make changes related to Sara's **Organization**. Be prepared to share your revision!

## **Sara's story:**

Mom always says, "Don't play ball in the house!". Well, I have learned my lesson and I will never play with a ball in my house again.

It was seven years ago, when I was eight years old, my little brother Elliot and I were playing with a ball in our living room, the nicest room in the house when I threw the ball to Elliot the ball hit my moms favorite lamp. Time seemed to slow down as it was falling.

"Crash!", was the dreaded sound it made when it hit the floor. My brother and I ran as fast as we could so we would not get in trouble. My mom didn't find out until the next day when she walked into the living room and starred at the shattered lamp on the floor, ruined beyond repair. She found out that I did it and was upset with me and sent me to my room. I was so sad that I had broken her most precious possession and that she had gotten mad at me for what I had done and then did not tell her.

I learned a lesson that day that if you do something wrong, tell someone right away because it will only be worse if they find out you did not tell. From then I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

on I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.!

# Understanding and Applying MY Tutor Feedback Group Assignment

## Group Members:

## Writing Domain: Language Use and Style AND Mechanics and Conventions

### Instructions:

**Step 1:** Read Sara's story and decide as a group how you would score it.

**Step 2:** Carefully read the MY Tutor feedback attached to this handout and follow the MY Tutor instructions. You can highlight directly on this paper.

**Step 3:** Discuss how Sara can revise the *Language Use and Style AND Mechanics and Conventions* portion of her piece. Then, on a separate piece of paper each group member needs to INDIVIDUALLY revise a portion of this story. You only need to make changes related to Sara's *Language Use and Style and Mechanics and Conventions*. Be prepared to share your revision!

### Sara's story:

Mom always says, "Don't play ball in the house!". Well, I have learned my lesson and I will never play with a ball in my house again.

It was seven years ago, when I was eight years old, my little brother Elliot and I were playing with a ball in our living room, the nicest room in the house when I threw the ball to Elliot the ball hit my moms favorite lamp. Time seemed to slow down as it was falling.

"Crash!", was the dreaded sound it made when it hit the floor. My brother and I ran as fast as we could so we would not get in trouble. My mom didn't find out until the next day when she walked into the living room and starred at the shattered lamp on the floor, ruined beyond repair. She found out that I did it and was upset with me and sent me to my room. I was so sad that I had broken her most precious possession and that she had gotten mad at me for what I had done and then did not tell her.

I learned a lesson that day that if you do something wrong, tell someone right away because it will only be worse if they find out you did not tell. From then I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

on I have learned, "If mom says don't, then don't!" In the end, if you ever think about playing ball in the house, just remember my story and think again.

# MY Tutor Feedback – Focus and Meaning

## Revision Goal 1: Understand the purpose, audience, and task.

1. Read the prompt. Find the topic, purpose, and audience. Write them on your focus checklist or on a blank sheet of paper.

2. Read your own writing and think:

- What is the main event in my story? The topic of YOUR story should be the SAME as the topic of the prompt.
- Why did I write my story? Am I writing to describe, to inform, to persuade? The purpose of YOUR story should be the SAME as the purpose in the prompt.
- To whom am I writing? The audience to whom YOU are writing should be the SAME as the audience in the prompt.

### Example:

**Topic:** Write about [a special day in your life](#).

*I wrote about the day I was in the talent show because that was a special day for me.*

**Purpose:** [Describe the day](#).

*I used many details to describe the talent show.*

**Audience:** Write a story for your [friends and family](#).

*I included important details that I think will be interesting to my family and friends like how I felt before the talent show, what I did for my talent, how well I performed, and how I felt afterwards.*

## Revision Goal 2: Narrow your focus.

1. Highlight the main event in yellow.
2. Underline events and details that are NOT about the main event.
3. Move or remove the events and details that are NOT about the main event.

### Example:



**Before Revision:** I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show. Jake and I watched a scary movie that night.

**Frank's Strategy:** *The topic of my story is the talent show; watching a scary movie is not. I need to delete details that are not related to the main event.*

**After Revision:** I will always remember the day I sang a song in the talent show.

**Frank's Reflection:** *I removed "Jake and I watched a scary movie that night" because it has nothing to do with the main event, the talent show.*

### **Revision Goal 3: Use details to support the purpose of the story.**

1. Highlight, in green, details about the main event.
2. Add key details about the main event: Where did the event take place? What did the scene look like? How did people act?

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** The school auditorium was packed for the show.

**Frank's Goal:** *I need to add more important information and details about the talent show, such as: Where did it take place? What did it look like? What happened?*

**After Revision:** The decorated school auditorium was packed with parents and students standing shoulder to shoulder.

**Frank's Strategy:** *I added colorful details about the auditorium, the place where the main event took place.*

# MY Tutor Feedback – Content and Development

## Revision Goal 1: Create a detailed setting.

1. Highlight, in green, the words that tell when and where your story took place. Add more specific details about where your story took place and when it happened. For example, you can describe the place, the weather, the time of day or year, or the season.

2. Now use your five senses to describe your setting. How does the setting look, feel, smell, or sound? Use your five senses to add more details to your setting.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** On Halloween, we were wiggling into our costumes in our big kitchen.

**Annie's Strategy:** *What sights and sounds did the characters experience in the kitchen? How did they feel? I need to add sensory details.*

**After Revision:** It was a cold, dark Halloween night. We were wiggling into our scary ghost costumes in our big kitchen. I heard the big clock on the wall chime. It was already six o'clock!

**Annie's Reflection:** *I described the time of night the action was taking place. I also added sensory details to help my reader "feel" like they are in my story. For example, I described how the Halloween costumes looked, how the characters felt, and what sounds the characters heard.*

## Revision Goal 2: Create realistic characters.

1. Underline your characters. Give your characters names if they do not already have them.

2. Highlight, in green, details about your characters. Add more details to help your reader "see" your characters: how did they look, act, and dress?

3. Highlight, in red, words that describe your characters' actions. Use strong verbs (action words) to tell what your characters are doing. Use the word bank to help you.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** My little brother and I were in our ghost costumes.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I need to name my characters and tell more about them. What did they look like? How did they act?*

**After Revision:** My annoying little brother, Vincent, has copied everything I do since we were young. This Halloween wasn't any different, because when I wanted to dress up as a ghost, he did too. Now that we were both dressed in our costumes, we looked like ghost brothers, a big one and a little one. But who is scared of a little ghost brother?

**Annie's Reflection:** *I named the little brother "Vincent" and explained that he was "annoying." By telling the reader that Vincent always "copied everything" his older brother did, I described how Vincent acted.*

4. Dialogue (what your characters say) makes your characters seem more real. Is there a place in your story where two characters interact with each other? Try adding dialogue here to show what your characters would say to themselves or to each other.

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** Since he was so excited, my little brother ran and beat me to every door. Everyone told him how good his costume was. I was jealous, because it was my idea to be a ghost first.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I need to add dialogue. What would my characters say? How would they say it?*

**After Revision:** Since he was so excited, my little brother ran and beat me to the door.

"Trick-or-treat!" he yelled.

"Aren't you a scary, scary ghost!" everyone told him, even though I thought he was too little to be a very scary ghost.

"It was my idea to be a ghost first," I mumbled, but nobody heard me.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I added dialogue to help my reader "hear" exactly what my characters say and how they say it.*

### **Revision Goal 3: Create a well-developed plot.**

1. Highlight the main event (what you most want your reader to know) in yellow. Add important information about what happened during the event: how did the characters feel, what did they do, and what did they say?

**Before Revision:** We still had a lot more houses to trick-or-treat at when I started to get mad. I decided to play a trick on my little brother.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I need to explain what is important about the main event. What information does my reader need to know to understand the main event?*

**After Revision:** We still had a lot more houses to trick-or-treat at when I started to get mad at Vincent. Dressing as a ghost was my idea, but everyone told him he had a good costume! It wasn't fair. I decided to play a trick on my little brother.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I added a sentence explaining why the older brother was mad at Vincent and why he decided to play a trick on Vincent. This information helps the reader understand what is important about the main event.*

2. Underline the problem, or conflict. Add more details about the problem: What caused the problem? Who has the problem? Why is it a problem?

**Example:**

**Before Revision:** Everyone told my little brother how good his costume was. I was jealous, because it was my idea to be a ghost first.

**Annie's Strategy:** *I need to explain why jealousy is a conflict. What caused the problem? What characters have the problem?*

**After Revision:** Everyone told my little brother how good his costume was. I was jealous, because it was my idea to be a ghost first. Vincent was always copying me and then getting all the credit. It wasn't fair, and I wanted a little revenge.

**Annie's Reflection:** *I added a sentence to explain why the older brother was jealous and what caused him to be jealous. This made my conflict clearer.*

# MY Tutor Feedback – Organization

## Revision Goal 1: Give your story a beginning, middle, and end.

1. Number the events in your story. In the beginning, did you tell what took place first? In the middle, did you tell what took place next? At the end, did you tell what took place last? Make sure nothing is out of order.

2. Add more details to the beginning of your story to grab your reader's attention. For example, you could use your five senses to add details or you could add strong action words.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** (1) First, Sarah got out of bed. (2) Then, she ate some cereal. (3) A few minutes later, she heard her bus coming down the street. (4) She went out the door.

**Oscar's Strategy:** *I put all of my events in the correct order. Now, I need to add lively words to excite my reader!*

**After Revision:** First, Sarah jumped out of bed. Then, she ate a bowl of cereal. A few minutes later, she heard her bus roar down the street. She ran out the door to catch her bus.

**Oscar's Reflection:** *In order to grab the reader's attention, I changed weak action words, "made" and "got," to powerful action words, "jumped out" and "ran." I also added "roar" to help my reader "hear" my story.*

## Revision Goal 2: Use transitions to show how your events are connected

1. Highlight, in orange, the transitions (words such as first, second, before, after, today, yesterday, in addition) in your story.

2. Add more transitions to show how your events go together. Use the word bank to help you!

### Example:

**Before Revision:** First, Sarah jumped out of bed. Then, she ate a bowl of cereal. A few minutes later, she heard her bus roar down the street. She ran out the door to catch her bus.

**Oscar's Strategy:** *I need to use transitional words to help my reader follow the action in my story! When did Sarah go out the door?*

**After Revision:** First, Sarah jumped out of bed. Then, she ate a bowl of cereal. A few minutes later, she heard her bus roar down the street. Suddenly, she ran out the door to catch her bus.

**Oscar's Reflection:** *I added the transitional word, "Suddenly," to show how events in my story go together.*

# MY Tutor Feedback – Language Use & Style

## Revision Goal 1: Choose words carefully.

1. Underline the nouns (people, places, and things) in your story. Use specific words to tell how people, places, and things look, sound, feel, or smell.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, marshmallows, and cookies.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to add sensory details to describe the things in my story.*

**After Revision:** Because it was cold out, he didn't buy the ice pops. Instead he bought hot chocolate, fluffy marshmallows, and chocolate chip cookies.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I added "fluffy" to describe the marshmallows and "chocolate chip" to describe the cookies. Specific details will help my reader picture my story.*

2. Highlight your verbs in red. Use strong verbs (for example, run, walk, scream, cook, bolt, jump). Tell when and how people and things act: Did they act now, yesterday, this afternoon? Did they act slowly, loudly, quickly? Use the word bank to help you.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** The boy **put on** his gray wool coat **to walk** to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he **looked** at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to replace weak action words with strong action words. I also need to add details about when and how characters acted.*

**After Revision:** The boy slipped into his gray wool coat to walk quickly to the grocery store. When he got to the store, he stared at the ice pops. Because it was cold out, he didn't buy them.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I replaced my weaker action words, "put on" and "looked," with stronger, specific action words "slid into" and "stared." I also added an adverb (-ly word), "quickly," to describe how the boy walked.*

## Revision Goal 2: Write short and long sentences.

1. Highlight short sentences in pink. Highlight, in purple, long sentences that include more than one idea. Be sure to use both long and short sentences.
2. Combine short sentences with conjunctions, such as "and," "but," and "or."

### Example:

**Before Revision:** He paid for the food. Then he walked home.

**Larry's Strategy:** *I need to combine ideas in short sentences using connecting words like "and" or "but."*

**After Revision:** He paid for the food and walked home.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I connected two sentences by replacing "then he" with the conjunction "and."*

## Revision Goal 3: Make the beginnings of your sentences more interesting.

1. Underline the first three words in each sentence. Do all of your sentences start the same way?
2. If sentences begin the same way, add details such as when or where something happened to change how some of your sentences begin.

### Example:

**Before Revision:** He paid for the food and walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

**Larry's Strategy:** *Variety is the key to interesting writing. I need to change the beginnings of sentences that sound the same.*

**After Revision:** After he paid for the food, he walked home. He was thinking about his yummy winter snack.

**Larry's Reflection:** *I added the transition word "after" to tell when the action took place and to change the beginning of my first sentence.*



# MY Tutor Feedback – Mechanics and Conventions

## Revision Goal 1: Eliminate errors in grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

1. Read your writing. You may want to read out loud (to yourself) so that you can hear many of your mistakes and correct them.
2. Correct any spelling errors using the spell checker. Then, make your reader SMILE by doing the following:

**Sentences:** Make sure each sentence has a subject and an action.

- **Before Revision:** *My house on Halloween.*
- **Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that this sentence does not have an action. I need to add a verb to make this fragment a sentence.*
- **After Revision:** *We put on our costumes in my house on Halloween night.*
- **Marcy's Reflection:** *I added a verb to make the sentence fragment a complete sentence.*

**Marks:** End each sentence with a punctuation mark.

- **Before Revision:** *My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen how funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him what was my mom thinking when she bought it*
- **Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that this paragraph does not have any punctuation. I need to put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence to make my writing clearer.*
- **After Revision:** *My five-year-old brother and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen. How funny Mikey looked wearing his costume, which was too big for him! What was my mom thinking when she bought it?*
- **Marcy's Reflection:** *I put punctuation marks at the end of each sentence. If the sentence was exciting, I added an exclamation point. If the sentence was a question, I added a question mark.*

**Indents:** Indent when you begin a new paragraph.

- **Before Revision:** *As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.*
- **Marcy's Strategy:** *I noticed that I did not indent the beginning of this paragraph. I need to indent each paragraph.*

- **After Revision:** \_\_\_\_ As my five-year-old brother, Mikey and I were putting on our costumes in the kitchen, Mikey yelled, "I can't wait to go trick-or-treating!" Yesterday, we mapped out the entire neighborhood and planned where we wanted to go trick-or-treating. We better get started soon or we will never make it to all of the houses.
- **Marcy's Reflection:** *I indented the beginning of the paragraph.*

**Letters:** Start each sentence with a **capital letter**.

- **Before Revision:** it was Halloween night. my brother and i got ready in the kitchen.
- **Marcy's Strategy:** *These sentences do not begin with capital letters. I need to capitalize the words at the beginning of sentences.*
- **After Revision:** It was Halloween night. My brother and I got ready in the kitchen.
- **Marcy's Reflection:** *I changed all of the lowercase letters in the beginning of sentences to capital letters. I need to remember that I always have to capitalize the pronoun, "I."*

**Editor:** Click on MY Editor for more ways to improve your writing.

# Sample Revision Plan

**Name:** Sara Mills  
**Class:** Narrative Writing  
**Prompt:** A Special Day

## **My Goals:**

### Focus and Meaning:

I must focus on my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday and the gifts and events that made that day special.

### Content and Development:

I will write about the people I spent my birthday with and the great presents I received.

## **Writing Strategy:**

### Focus and Meaning:

I will begin my story just before I open my presents. I will only write about the people that were there and the presents that I got on my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Content and Development:

In my revised story, I will first describe two of the smaller presents I received then surprise my readers with my favorite gift—the bicycle. Adding details and dialogue to my story will allow my readers to share in my anticipation of the last “big” gift. I hope building suspense will help my readers to feel the same excitement that I felt on my birthday.

## **Reflection:**

I started writing without planning. Next time I will outline my ideas and select the details before I start writing my story. I want to include more details about my special birthday and remove the details about my old bike, since that is not the topic of my story.

# Writers' Workshop: Testing Your Writing on an Audience

1. Assemble in groups of three (3)---a writer and two peer responders
2. Print 3 copies of your paper: one for you and one for each of your two editors

**Goal: To strengthen your introduction, conflict and conclusion of your story**

## The Process

- Read your writing out loud...slowly. Your peer responders should not comment on your writing while you are reading aloud.
- Your peer responders should read your paper at least once more to themselves. During the second reading, they may mark up your paper with questions/comments that they will share with you verbally.
- During the time your responders are commenting on your paper, you are to take notes, NOT SPEAK.
- Once they are completely finished, you may ask your responders questions to further clarify their comments, as needed.

## **The Revision Plan, the Revision and the Reflection (3Rs)**

- Write a revision plan that reflects the goals and strategies suggested by your peers.
- Revise your essay
- Highlight the changes and describe the reasons for those changes
- Write a reflection that describes your thinking throughout the writing process
- Reassemble with your group to share your revised draft and your reflection
- Submit the revised draft, revision plan with a reflection to your teacher for credit

## Suggested comments:

- You have an engaging introduction. I like the way...
- Your introduction tells or informs rather than excites. Perhaps you can...
- I like the way you used conflict to .....
- Consider adding a scene in your story where.....
- Consider adding more emotion to your characters so that readers can identify with what characters are feeling
- Consider adding more dialogue so that your readers can hear the characters thinking.
- Tell me what you mean by "....."
- I would suggest that you .....(add, remove, rearrange, reword, rephrase, etc)
- Consider concluding your story by leaving your reader with a strong impression of the main point or message you are expressing. You may even want to end with dialogue.

## Questions to Prompt Reflection

1. What thoughts did you have about your paper before the writers' workshop?
2. What did you become aware of during the session?
3. What did you change? Why?
4. What did you keep the same? Why?
5. Which suggestions were most helpful? Least helpful?
6. What thoughts do you have about your revised draft?
7. What have you learned about yourself as a writer that you will take into consideration for your next focused writing?

Revision Plan (you can complete this in MY Access!)

My goals:

My strategy:

Reflection (complete after you revise your story):

Score key for sample essays:

Sara: 2.9

Kristine: 5.4

Megan: 4.3