

WEEK 6-7 Writing Packet

Write the microtheme at the end of this week's packet. You'll be asked to do additional work on the microtheme after today's lesson. This week, when you are finished, *please do not tear off the microtheme.*

WRITING TOPIC: Writing Descriptive & Narrative Essays

I. STRUCTURE: Introduction + Body + Conclusion

A. Introduction

1. Length
 - a. One or two paragraphs
2. Purpose
 - a. State controlling idea / topic sentence *or*
 - b. State the thesis
 - i. The main point you will develop, explain, analyze, or argue
 - ii. Should show up no later than third sentence
 - c. "Hook" to gain reader's interest
 - d. Provide background introductory information
 - e. Provide transition to body paragraphs
3. Example (with thesis)

The state of California, along with the rest of the nation, has a problem with society involving drinking and driving. Prohibition is not the answer, as history has demonstrated. But there is a practical answer to be found in a law. I believe that the legal BAC (blood-alcohol concentration) while driving should be lowered from .08 percent to .04 percent for three strong reasons.

B. Support Paragraphs

1. Contain topic sentence
2. Have logical and unified order
 - a. Rely on an organized outline
3. Have clear function in supporting the essay's thesis / controlling idea
 - a. Provide details
 - b. Give examples
 - c. Explain concepts, ideas, issues
4. Employ transition words and phrases
 - a. At the beginning of sentences
 - b. From one paragraph to another

Transition Words & Phrases

First, second, third, then, next, soon, after, now, finally, lastly, when
 For example, however, otherwise, therefore, on the other hand, similarly, consequently
 This is, these are, that is, those are

5. Example:

First, driving in California is a privilege, not a right, and a person impaired by alcohol should not be allowed that privilege. Statutory law states that when stopped by a police officer who suspects drunk driving, one must submit to a BAC test. The level of impairment is an individual trait because of the elapsed time of consumption, body size, and tolerance, but alcohol is a depressant to all of us. It affects our nervous system and slows our muscular reactions. As a result of extensive scientific study, Sweden determined that .04 percent BAC was the level of significant impairment, and, therefore, it passed a federal law to enforce drunk driving penalties at that point. Penalties there are extreme.

Second, we, like the people in Sweden, are concerned about the dangers of drunk driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has stated that "50 percent of all fatal accidents" involve intoxicated drivers and that 75 percent of those drivers have a BAC of .10 percent or higher. Cavanaugh and Associates, a California think tank, reports that in the four-year period between 2001 and 2005, 19,784 people were injured and 8,430 were killed in alcohol-related accidents in California.

C. Conclusion

1. Length
 - a. One to two paragraphs, but shortest
2. Purpose
 - a. Restate the thesis (using different words)
 - b. Summarize key points
 - c. Bring everything together
 - d. "Elegant exit"
 - i. Well-stated summary statement
 - ii. Quotation or anecdote
 - iii. "Food for thought" question
 - iv. Leave the reader feeling satisfied, but interested in reading more
3. Example

Police officers report that drinking people are quick to say, "I'm okay to drive," but every four years our nation loses more lives to drunk drivers than it lost in the entire Vietnam War. To lower the legal BAC limit to .04 percent would mean saving lives, property, and money.

Police officers report that drinking people are quick to say, "I'm okay to drive," but every four years our nation loses more lives to drunk drivers than it lost in the entire Vietnam War. To lower the legal BAC limit to .04 percent would mean property, money, and - most importantly - lives.

II. BASIC PATTERN OF NARRATIVE WRITING:

- A. Situation
 - The background, the basic who, what, when, where of the essay
- B. Conflict
 - A problem or friction at the heart of the essay
- C. Struggle
 - How the conflict is dealt with
- D. Outcome
 - Result of the struggle
- E. Meaning
 - The “moral of the story,” the lesson learned

III. TECHNIQUES OF NARRATIVE WRITING:

- A. Dialogue
 - She said – He said:

“Did you say something, Sammy?”
“I said I quit.”
“I thought you did.”
“You didn’t have to embarrass them.”
“It was they who were embarrassing us.”

- B. Transition (often time-related transitional words and phrases, to help move the story forward)

Now here comes the sad part of the story . . .
Then, everybody’s luck begins to run out . . .
All this while . . .

- C. Verb Tense
 1. Summaries of and reactions to fiction are often present tense
 2. Recounting of historical and personal events are usually past tense
 3. Do not switch tense back and forth within a piece – and certainly not within a paragraph – unless the shift is necessary for a specific reason (be prepared to explain the reason)

In walks these girls in nothing but bathing suits. I’m in the third checkout slot, with my back to the door, so I don’t see them until they’re over by the bread. The one that caught my eye first was the one in the plaid green two-piece. She was a chunky kid, with a good tan and a sweet broad soft-looking can with those two crescents of white just under it, where the sun never seems to hit, at the top of the backs of her legs.

D. Point of View**1. First-person "I"**

- a. **Involved participant** often uses the first-person "I"
- b. **Detached observer** uses first-person "I" less often and less prominently

2. Third-person

- a. **Distant writer** uses the third-person "he," "she," "they," etc., to tell a story about other people and other times

I stood there with my hand on a box of HiHo crackers trying to remember if I rang it up or not. I ring it up again and the customer starts giving me hell.

IV. DESCRIPTIVE WRITING**A. Types of Description****1. Objective**

- Factual, without any judgment or emotion, such as describing how something works

Looking back in the windows, over the bags of peat moss and aluminum lawn furniture stacked on the pavement, I could see Lengel in my place in the slot . . .

2. Subjective / Emotional

- Focus on the feelings, mood, and personal perspectives

I thought and said, "No," but it wasn't about that I was thinking. I go through the punches, 4, 9, GROC, TOT - it's more complicated than you think and after you do it often enough, it begins to make a little song that you hear words to, in my case "Hello" (*bing*) there, you (*gung*) hap-py peepul (*splat*)!" - the *splat* being the drawer flying out. I uncrease the bill, tenderly as you may imagine, it just having come from between the two smoothest scoops of vanilla I had ever known were there."

B. Dominant Impression

- Describe only those details that are important for the reader's understanding of the main topic

There was this chunky one, with the two-piece - it was bright green and the seams on the bra were still sharp and her belly was still pretty pale so I guessed she got it (the suit) - there was this one, with one of those chubby berry-faces, the lips all bunched together under her nose, this one, and a tall one, with black hair that hadn't quite frizzed right, and one of those sunburns right across under the eyes, and a chin that was too long - you know, the kind of girl other girls think is very "striking" and "attractive" but never quite makes it, as they very well know, which is why they like her so much - and then the third one, that wasn't quite so tall.

Lengel comes in from haggling with a truck full of cabbages on the lot and is about to scuttle into the door marked MANAGER behind which he hides all day when the girls touch his eye. Lengel's pretty dreary, teaches Sunday school and the rest, but he doesn't miss much.

C. Imagery and Adjectives

1. Of concrete particulars: what we can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell

She had on a kind of dirty-pink - beige maybe, I don't know - bathing suit with a little nubble all over it and, what got me, the straps were down. They were off her shoulders looped loose around the cool tops of her arms, and I guess as a result the suit had slipped a little on her, so all around the top of the cloth there was this shining rim. If it hadn't been there you wouldn't have known there could have been anything whiter than those shoulders.

2. Of abstractions: qualities, concepts, ideas

She's one of those cash-register-watchers, a witch about fifty with rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows, and I know it made her day to trip me up. She'd been watching cash registers for fifty years and probably never seen a mistake before. By the time I got her feathers smoothed and her goodies into a bag - she gives me a little snort in passing, if she'd been born at the right time they would have burned her over in Salem . . .

D. Order: Time and Space

- The when and where, in an ordered fashion

What he meant was, our town is five miles from a beach, with a big summer colony out on the Point, but we're right in the middle of town . . . and if you stand at our front doors you can see two banks and the Congregational church and the newspaper store and three real estate offices . . .

The whole store was like a pinball machine and I didn't know which tunnel they'd come out of. After a while they come around out of the far aisle, around the light bulbs, records at discount of the Caribbean Six or Tony Martin Sings or some such gunk you wonder they waste the wax on, sixpacks of candy bars, and plastic toys done up in cellophane that fall apart when a kid looks at them anyway. Around they come, Queenie still leading the way, and holding a little gray jar in her hand. Slots Three through Seven are unmanned and I could see her wondering between Stokes and me . . .

V. WRITING PROCESS CHECKLIST

- Work out **situation, conflict, struggle, outcome, and meaning**
- What is your **subject/topic**?
- What is the **point of view**?
- What is the **dominant impression**?
- What is the **situation**?
- What is the **conflict and struggle**?
- What **details** support the **dominant impression**?
- What is the **order**?
- What is the **meaning**

Write the microtheme below. You'll be asked to do additional work on the microtheme after today's lesson. You have enough space to write freely for ten minutes or so. When you are finished, **don't tear this off; you will work with it later.**

Name _____

Write a microtheme of 80 to 100 words about one of the saddest or scariest moments of your life. Explain the setting (the "who, what, when, and where" that was involved); the problem, conflict, or friction at the heart of the incident; how the conflict played out (what happened?); the result; and the meaning, or "moral" of the story.

