



Narrative Writing

A 4-point rubric · with student-friendly exemplars

Criteria	4 — Soaring	3 — Rising	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning
Story & Structure	Clear hook, rising tension, and a satisfying, earned ending.	Beginning, middle, and end are clear and connected.	Events are present but may jump or feel rushed.	Hard to follow; events feel listed, not shaped.
Descriptive Detail	Vivid sensory details put the reader inside the moment.	Good details; reader can picture most scenes.	Some details, but often tells instead of shows.	Few details; scenes stay flat and general.
Voice & Word Choice	Strong, distinct voice; precise, surprising words.	Consistent voice; words fit the story.	Voice comes and goes; words are plain.	Little voice; repeated, vague wording.
Conventions	Clean; any risks are purposeful and controlled.	Minor errors that don't slow the reader.	Errors sometimes make meaning unclear.	Frequent errors interrupt the reading.

See the Difference

★ 4 · Soaring

"The door groaned as if warning me away. I hesitated, heart hammering — then slipped into the waiting dark, where something shifted and went still."

3 · Rising

"My hand trembled as I pushed the creaky door open. The darkness inside seemed to breathe, but I stepped forward anyway."

2 · Developing

"I opened the creaky door slowly. It was dark and a little scary inside, so I walked in carefully."

1 · Beginning

"I opened the door. It was scary. Then I went in."

Same moment — "opening a door" — at all four levels.

Before You Turn It In

- ☐ My first line makes the reader curious.
- ☐ I *showed* at least three sensory details.
- ☐ My characters feel real (action + dialogue).
- ☐ My ending feels earned, not rushed.
- ☐ I read it aloud and fixed what tripped me.
- ☐ I traded a few plain words for precise ones.

