First, Next, Last: My True Story

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 1
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Creative writing: narratives
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to tell events in order with details and an ending. They act, draw, and write their own three-part true story.

Curriculum links

- Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

Learning objectives

- Students will retell two or more events in order using first, then, last.
- Students will add one small detail about what happened in each event.
- Students will end the narrative with a closing feeling or sentence.

Success criteria

- I can tell what happened first, next, and last in order.
- I can add one small detail to show what happened.
- I can write an ending that shows how it felt or finished.

What students already know

Ask: What did you do before school? Listen for two things in order and one time word like first or then.

Key words

first	at the very start of what happened
next	what comes right after one thing
last	at the very end of what happened
detail	a small bit that tells more, like color, sound, or feeling [13]
ending	how a story feels finished and closed

Materials

- Projected Slides 1-5 and 9-12
- drawing paper folded in thirds
- pencils
- crayons
- three-box template with First, Then, Last printed for support

Before the lesson

- Fold drawing paper in thirds to make three boxes and print three-box templates with First, Then, Last
- Test projected Slides 1-5 and 9-12
- Clear floor space for groups to act in place with arm space
- Set out pencils and crayons

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook students and recall telling morning events in order.

YOU DO

1. Welcome class and say the hook: You be the actors — then you be the authors and finish your story!
2. Show Slide 1 My Story Time and read title line: Tell what happened!
3. Show Slide 2 Think, pair, share and read question: What did you do this morning?
4. Have partners tell each other two things from this morning in order.

STUDENTS DO

1. Turn to a partner and say two things they did this morning.
2. Listen to partner and try to hear which thing came first.
3. Give a thumbs-up if they heard two things in order.

Say: Stories tell what happened. You will act your story first. Then you will draw it and write it. Your story will have a start, what happened, and how it finished.

Ask: What did you do first this morning? (One first thing, like got up, brushed teeth, or ate breakfast.) · What did you do next? (A second thing that came after the first thing.)

Check understanding: Ask pairs to say their two events; listen for order. If mixed up, model first and next with hand steps and have them repeat.

Support: Let students answer with one word or point to a picture and repeat first or next after you. **Stretch:** Ask students to add where it happened or how it felt.

Use: Slides 1-2

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5–15 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To model a sequenced narrative with time words, details, and closure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 Big idea and read: A story tells first, next, last.
2. Show Slide 4 Make a Story steps and Slide 10 Magic Story Words with First, Next, Last.
3. Explain that narrative writing tells a story, presenting readers with a sequence of events [13].
4. Model drawing three quick boxes and writing one sentence per box with a detail and a happy finish.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the model and repeat First, Next, Last with hand motions.
2. Point to each box as the teacher reads each sentence.
3. Say the detail and the feeling they heard.

Say: First tells the start. Next tells what happened. I add a small color or sound bit. Last tells the end and how I felt. Creative writing expresses voice and ideas in an engaging and imaginative manner [7].

Worked example: First I lost my blue crayon under the table. Next I looked and saw something little and blue near my shoe. Last I felt happy and drew a big red star. First starts it, next tells what happened with a color detail, last closes how it felt.

Ask: Which word starts our story? (First.) · What small detail told more about what happened? (Blue, little, near my shoe, or another color, size, or sound word.) · How do we show closure at the end? (Tell how it finished or felt, like felt happy.)

Check understanding: Show three fingers for three boxes and have all point to first, next, last. Reteach any word missed with Slide 10 cards.

Support: Point to printed First, Next, Last cards while students repeat only the time word. **Stretch:** Have students suggest a sound or feeling word to grow the middle sentence.

Use: Slides 3-4, 10

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15–25 min **Act Together** 10 min · Groups

To practice telling two events plus an ending in order before writing.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 5 What could this be? and read: What happened here? Walked in a rain puddle!
2. Show Slide 11 Pick a Story and read: Which story should we tell together? Lost tooth, Rain walk, Big ball game.
3. Take a quick vote and assign groups to act the start, what happened, and the finish.
4. Remind students that a narrative organizes thoughts to make sense of things that happen [11].

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote for one class story and join a small group.
2. Act the two steps plus happy finish in order while saying First, Then, Last.
3. Watch other groups and give thumbs-up for correct order.

Say: We will act it, then draw it, then write it. Act one thing first. Act what happened next. Act how it ended. Use First, Then, Last when you speak.

Worked example: First we walk with splashy steps. Then we stop and look down at wet, cold water. Last we laugh and say: We are all wet! Each act is one event in order with a detail and a closing feeling.

Ask: What happened first in our acted story? (The starting event, like we walked.) · What word tells what happened next? (Next or then.)

Check understanding: Each group says its three lines; listen for time words and order. If out of order, have class reorder with steps forward for first, next, last.

Support: Let students hold a First, Then, or Last card and say only that word plus one action word. **Stretch:** Ask students to add a short detail sentence about what they saw or heard at one stop.

Use: Slides 5, 11

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25–50 min **Draw It, Write It** 25 min · On their own

To draw and write a sequenced narrative with details and closure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 Your task and read steps: Draw two things you did. Write First, Next, Last. Add one detail and ending.
2. Hand out paper folded in thirds, pencils, and crayons for students to draw and write their own true story.
3. Remind students narratives present connected events in order to an audience [10].
4. Circulate, help with spelling, and prompt for one detail and a last-box feeling.

STUDENTS DO

1. Draw three quick pictures for start, happening, and finish.
2. Write one short sentence per box starting with First, Then or Next, Last.
3. Read the story to a partner, pointing to each time word.

Say: Draw one quick picture in each box. Write one short sentence in each box. Start with First, use Next or Then in the middle, end with Last. Make the last box show how it ended or felt.

Worked example: Box 1 picture of shoes and sentence: First I looked for my big brown shoes. Box 2 picture of shoes by door and sentence: Next I heard a thump by the door. Box 3 picture of smiling face and sentence: Last I felt glad and ran outside.

Ask: Where does your detail go? (Inside an event to tell more, like big, brown, thump, or glad.) · How does your last box show closure? (It tells how it ended or felt, like felt glad.)

Check understanding: Collect quick show of last boxes; check each has First, Then/Next, Last, a detail, and an ending. Pull small group to add missing part if needed.

Support: Provide a three-box template with time words printed and allow one-word labels plus telling the ending orally. **Stretch:** Have students add dialogue, a sound word, or a second detail sentence to the middle event.

Use: Slide 9

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50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To review time words, details, and endings and check the objectives.

YOU DO

1. Invite two students to read their three sentences and point to First, Next, Last.
2. Show Slide 12 Quick quiz and ask: What word starts? First. What word is next? Next. What word ends? Last.
3. Restate that stories need two or more events in order, a small detail, and a finish.

STUDENTS DO

1. Share stories in pairs, then two students share to the class.
2. Answer the quiz together by saying First, Next, Last.
3. Show I can with fingers: three for three parts, one for detail, closed hands for ending.

Say: Good authors finish the story. Tell your events in order. Use your magic story words. Add one small detail and tell how it ended.

Ask: Why do we use First, Next, Last? (To show event order, so listeners know what came before or after.) · What makes a good ending? (It tells how the story finished or how the writer felt.)

Check understanding: Use Slide 12 answers and self-check fingers. If time words are mixed, point again to Slide 10 cards and repeat in order.

Support: Let students point to the correct quiz word instead of reading it aloud. **Stretch:** Ask students to retell their story using Finally or After that for one event.

Use: Slide 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Events told out of order or only one event	Pictures or sentences do not match first, then, last sequence	Have student touch each box in order and retell with First, Then, Last before writing [10].
Missing time words	Sentences tell what happened but do not start with a time word	Point to word wall and have student add First, Next or Then, Last to start each sentence.
No detail or no sense of closure	Plain We played with no color, size, sound, or feeling and a sudden stop	Ask what, where, or how it felt and add one detail and a last-box feeling [13].

Support

- Provide a three-box template with First, Then, Last printed and sentence starters like First I___.

Stretch

- Have students add dialogue, a sound word, or a second detail sentence to the middle event.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with students who need writing help: help them say the story first, scribe lightly for tracing if needed, and prompt for one detail and the ending feeling.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
What word starts your story?	First
What small detail can you add to show what happened?	A color, size, sound, or feeling word

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What does the last part tell?	How the story ended or felt

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