Tiny Moment, Big Story

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 2
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Creative writing: narratives
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to tell one small event in order with actions, thoughts, and feelings. They write 4 to 5 sentences using time words and a closing feeling.

Curriculum links

- Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Learning objectives

- Students will write a short narrative about one real event in order.
- Students will include action, thought, and feeling details with time words.
- Students will end the narrative with a sense of closure.

Success criteria

- I can tell events in order using first, next, then, last.
- I can show actions, thoughts, and feelings with details.
- I can end my story with a finished closing feeling.

What students already know

Ask: Who can tell me one tiny thing that happened yesterday in order? Listen for 2-3 students to use first, next, last.

Key words

narrative	a story that tells what happened in order from start to end [11]
event	one thing that happens in a story
detail	a small part that helps you see, hear, or feel what happened [11]
temporal word	like first, next, then, or last that shows order in time [11]
closure	a finished feeling at the end that shows the problem is over [10]

Materials

- Small notebooks
- Pencils
- Detail checklist (action, thought, feeling, order words, ending)
- Slides 1, 3-4, 6, 8-11
- Video clip 3 "What is a narrative?" (0:00-3:51) ready to play

Before the lesson

- Print or copy detail checklist for each student: action, thought, feeling, order words, ending
- Load Slides 1, 3-4, 6, 8-11 and test Video clip 3 (0:00-3:51) with sound
- Place small notebooks and pencils on desks, keep floor space clear for turn-and-talk

Lesson outline

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

Hook interest and recall tiny real events that can stretch into a story.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 and greet the class with energy.
2. Say the hook: Yesterday a student saw a trash can tip over in the wind.
3. Think aloud: That tiny moment is a whole story if we stretch it out with first, next, last.
4. Ask partners to tell each other one tiny thing they saw or did yesterday.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to the hook and look at Slide 1.
2. Turn to a partner and tell one tiny real moment in order.
3. Share one idea back to the class if called on.

Say: Yesterday a student saw a trash can tip over in the wind - that is a whole story if we stretch it out! Tiny moments can become big stories when we tell what happened first, next, and last. Turn and tell your partner one tiny thing you saw or did.

Ask: What tiny moment could become a big story? (A small real thing like dropping crayons, trash can tipping, waiting for the bus.) · What words help us tell it in order? (First, next, then, last.)

Check understanding: Listen to 2-3 partners; if ideas are vague or out of order, model one more: First I slipped, next I caught the rail, last I felt shaky.

Support: Give frame: First I ___. Next I ___. Last I ___. **Stretch:** Add one feeling word to tell how you felt at the end.

Use: Slide 1

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

Teach what a narrative includes and how time words show order.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 and read the big idea together.
2. Show Slide 4 timeline and point to First, Next, Then, Last parts.
3. Play Video clip 3 and ask students to listen for what a narrative means and clap on order words.
4. Pause twice to name an action detail and a feeling detail heard.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read the big idea and timeline with the teacher.
2. Watch and listen, clapping softly when they hear first, next, then, after, finally.
3. Name one action and one feeling they heard.

Say: A good story shows what happened, how it felt, and how it ended. Narrative writing tells a story, presenting readers with a sequence of events [11]. Time words like first, next, then, and last move us forward in time.

Ask: What does a good story have to show? (What happened, how it felt, and how it ended.) · How do first, next, then, last help the reader? (They show order so the reader can follow from start to finish [10].)

Check understanding: Show thumbs up if you can say the four timeline parts; reteach any part with gestures if many are unsure.

Support: Hold up a card with first, then, finally and point as you say each part. **Stretch:** Name an extra time word from the video like after that, suddenly, or in the end.

Use: Slides 3–4, Video clip 3 (0:00–3:51)

15–25 min **Model Together** 10 min · Whole class

Model how to show actions, thoughts, and feelings and close the story.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 6 and model: do not just say sad, show tears, hugs, and shaky hands.
2. Show Slide 9 chain and read the four sentences aloud, pointing to each time word.
3. Think aloud to add a thought: I thought no one would help me, then label action, thought, feeling.
4. Explain that the last line must connect to the problem to feel finished [10].

STUDENTS DO

1. Chorally read the Slide 9 story and raise a hand on each time word.
2. Tell a partner which line shows action and which shows feeling.
3. Suggest a face, hands, or sound to make one line stronger.

Say: Great writers do not just tell feelings, they show them with actions. Descriptive writing appeals to the senses and paints a picture in the reader's mind [11]. We show and not just tell to pull the reader in [10]. Our last line will close the problem with a feeling.

Worked example: First I dropped my crayon box - action detail: crayons spilled and rolled under my desk. Next I looked under my desk - thought: I thought I would be late. Then a classmate helped me search - action: we picked up blue and red crayons fast. Last I felt happy and said thanks - closure and feeling that solves the problem.

Ask: Which sentence shows a thought? (I thought I would be late.) · Why does Last I felt happy and said thanks feel finished? (It solves the dropped-box problem and tells the closing feeling.)

Check understanding: Ask all to point to the closing line; if many point wrong, reread and ask which line tells how it ended.

Support: Offer feeling choices to circle: scared, proud, frustrated, happy, and finish I felt ___ because ___.
Stretch: Add what color something was or what it sounded like to make the picture stronger.

Use: Slides 6, 9

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25–50 min **Main Activity** 25 min · On their own

Write a short elaborated narrative with time words and closure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 8 and read the task: plan first, next, last, add action and feeling, end with closure.
2. Model quick planning in your head using the trash can tip: first tip, next chase, last fix.
3. Hand out notebooks and detail checklist and set 15 minutes to write 4 to 5 sentences.
4. Circulate, prompt for thought bubble thinking and closing feeling, and have early finishers add sound or color.

STUDENTS DO

1. Choose one tiny real moment and whisper-plan first, next, last.
2. Write 4 to 5 sentences in notebook using first, next or then, and last or finally.
3. Check off action, thought, feeling, order words, and ending, then read to a partner.

Say: Plan first, next, last in your head. Add one action and one feeling. Use time words and end with closure. On your own, write 4 to 5 sentences about a tiny real time, like waiting for the bus in rain or seeing cans tip over.

Worked example: First I saw the trash can tip over in the wind. Next cans rolled fast across the sidewalk with a loud clatter. I thought, 'Oh no, they will roll into the street.' Then I chased them and grabbed them with cold hands. Last I stood the can back up and felt proud because I helped.

Ask: What will you include in the middle? (What happened with an action detail and a thought or feeling.) · How will you close your story? (With finally or in the end plus how I felt after the problem was solved.)

Check understanding: Stop at 12 minutes, have partners check checklist; if missing thought or ending, model one sentence add before continuing.

Support: Let students dictate to a partner or use a five-line frame with starters for each line. **Stretch:** Add a sound or color detail and a title that fits the problem and solution.

Use: Slide 8

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

Judge closure and review order words and feeling details.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 and read the three choices aloud.
2. Have class vote thumbs up for the line that feels most finished and explain why.
3. Show Slide 11 and have students write exit ticket lines in notebooks.
4. Collect notebooks and restate: story shows what happened, how it felt, how it ended.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote and explain which ending gives closure and why the others do not.
2. Write exit ticket: one time word, one feeling shown with action, one question.
3. Share one exit line with the class if called on.

Say: Which closing line feels most finished? A good ending connects to the problem and tells the closing feeling. Write your one time word, one feeling you showed, and one question you still have.

Ask: Which closing line feels most finished and why? (I felt proud and smiled all day, because it tells the feeling after the problem.) · Why are the other two not good endings? (Then we went home just adds time; The crayons were blue and red is only a detail, no closing feeling.)

Check understanding: Read 3-4 exit tickets aloud; if closure is weak, give two Finally starters to choose and copy tomorrow.

Support: Offer two endings to choose and copy, both starting with Finally. **Stretch:** Explain how the feeling changed from beginning to end and why.

Use: Slides 10–11

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Events told out of order or missing time words	Story jumps from end to start or has no first, next, then, last	Use 3-box plan in order and point to each time word as you retell [11].
Telling feeling only, like I was sad, with no action	No faces, hands, sounds, or colors the reader can picture	Show and not just tell [10]: add tears, hugs, shaky hands, or loud clatter.
Story just stops with no closure	Last line adds new detail but does not solve problem or tell feeling	Add Finally or In the end plus closing feeling linked to the problem [10].

Support

- Use five-line frame with starters First___, Next___, Then___, Last___ or dictate to a partner.
- Provide word bank for feelings and actions like stomped, whispered, shivered, grinned and I felt ___ because ___.

Stretch

- Add sound or color detail and a title that fits the problem and solution.
- Add a speech or thought bubble line starting I thought ___ and a second feeling that changes.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with writers needing support during main activity; help plan first-next-last orally, scribe one dictated sentence if needed, and prompt checklist: action? thought? feeling? ending?

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Write one time word you used today and use it in order.	First, next, then, after that, or finally used to start an event in order.
Write one feeling you showed, not just told.	Example: My hands shook and I hugged my bag to show I was scared.
Which ending gives closure: I felt proud and smiled all day?	Yes, it tells the closing feeling after the problem is solved.

Homework

Tell a family member your tiny-moment story using first, next, last.

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