Plan Your Story in Order

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 4
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Creative writing: narratives
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to build real or imagined narratives in clear order with details. They map beginning, middle, and end and start a draft with sensory details.

Curriculum links

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences [2]
- Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events [2]

Learning objectives

- Students will plan a real or imagined narrative with clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Students will use descriptive details and action to develop events in sequence.
- Students will write a conclusion that fits the narrated events.

Success criteria

- I can order events from beginning to end.
- I can add details that paint a picture.
- I can end my story so it fits the events.

What students already know

Ask: What is a story you told recently? Was it real or made up? Thumbs up if you can name a beginning, middle, and end.

Key words

narrative	a story about real or made-up events told in order [1]
sequence	the order in which events happen in a story
detail	a small bit you see, hear, smell, touch, or taste that paints a picture [3]
dialogue	the exact talk between people in a story, with quotation marks
conclusion	the last part that fits what happened before [2]

Materials

- planning sheets
- pencils
- Slides 3-10 and 12 with projector and speakers
- Video clips 1-2
- Worksheet Tasks B and E, one copy per student
- crayons for quick sketches

Before the lesson

- Print planning sheets, one per student plus extras, and Worksheet Tasks B and E.
- Test Slides 3-10 and 12 and Video clip 1 (0:00-3:51) and Video clip 2 (0:00-5:00) with sound.
- Draw a large 3-box model on the board labeled Beginning, Middle, End with space for Character and Setting.

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Lesson outline

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

Hook students and review that narratives can be real or imagined and need order.

YOU DO

1. Say the hook: Writers plan before they write — let's map a story in three boxes.
2. Show Slide 4 and read its fact: A true day and a dragon tale are both narratives.
3. Show Slide 5 and take a quick vote on story spark: real surprise, imagined adventure, or real day with one imagined twist.
4. Connect votes to today: we will plan in order and add details that paint a picture.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen and vote for a spark by raising hands.
2. Turn and tell a partner one real and one imagined story idea in one sentence each.

Say: Writers plan before they write — let's map a story in three boxes. Narratives can tell real or imagined events in clear order. Today you will pick a spark and plan it from beginning to end.

Ask: Can a made-up dragon tale and a true day both be narratives? (Yes, narratives can be real or imagined events in clear order. [1]) · Which spark would you pick today and why? (Any of the three choices with a reason, such as I have a real surprise to tell.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name one real and one imagined idea; if not, give two quick examples and ask again.

Support: Let students point to the vote choices and say just one word: real or imagined. **Stretch:** Ask students to turn a real idea into a mixed one by adding one impossible twist.

Use: Slides 4-5

5–17 min **Teaching 1** 12 min · Whole class

Teach that narratives are ordered stories and model beginning, middle, and end.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 steps: Choose a real or imagined spark, map beginning, middle, end, add details and talk, end with feeling or lesson.
2. Show Slide 6 and play Video clip 1 (0:00-3:51) to define narrative as a story in order.
3. Explain that narratives are one of three main writing types alongside arguments and informative/explanatory texts [1].
4. Guide Worksheet Task B: students sort 4-5 short ideas into Real, Imagined, or Both and share clues.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the video and repeat the rule: a story in order.
2. Complete Worksheet Task B with a partner and explain one Real or Imagined choice.

Say: Narrative means a story in order. You choose a real, imagined, or mixed spark and then put events in order. The ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish applies to many types of writing [1].

Worked example: Bike ride in order: Beginning - A student checks the tires before a bike ride. Middle - Next, the chain slips off on the path and the student feels worried. End - Finally, a neighbor helps fix it and they ride home slow and happy. First, Next, Finally show clear order.

Ask: What makes a narrative different from a list of facts? (It tells real or imagined events in a clear beginning to end order.) · Which words help show sequence? (First, Next, Then, Finally.) · Is a talking bicycle real, imagined, or both? (Imagined, because bicycles cannot talk in real life.)

Check understanding: Hold up 1, 2, or 3 fingers for Beginning, Middle, End when teacher reads each bike sentence; reteach order if mixed.

Support: Give word cards First, Next, Finally to place on each sentence before sorting Task B. **Stretch:** Ask students to change one Real Task B idea into Imagined by adding one impossible detail.

Use: Slides 3, 6, Video clip 1 (0:00-3:51), Worksheet Task B

17–27 min **Teaching 2** 10 min · Whole class

Teach how sensory details and action make events clear and vivid.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 7 mindmap and read parts: clear order, see-hear-feel details, people act and talk, feelings shown, ending wraps up.
2. Play Video clip 2 (0:00-5:00) and ask students to listen for seeing and hearing words.
3. Model turning a weak sentence into a strong one by adding one sense detail and one action.
4. Explain that trying imagery helps writers mold language to their own way of writing [3].

STUDENTS DO

1. Point to the mindmap part the teacher models.
2. Turn and tell a partner which new word paints the clearest picture and why.

Say: Strong writers paint with words. Add what people see, hear, and feel, and show what they do and say. One strong sense detail in each part makes the reader feel there.

Worked example: Weak: The cafeteria was nice. Stronger step by step: 1. Add hearing: The cafeteria buzzed with loud chatter. 2. Add smell: It smelled like warm pizza. 3. Add action: A student balanced a tray and waved. Now the reader can picture it.

Ask: Which sentence paints a better picture and why? (The one with sense words like buzzed and warm pizza, because you can hear and smell it.) · How do action and talk help a narrative? (They show what people do and feel instead of just telling.)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write H for hearing or S for seeing for two details I read; re-model if many miss.

Support: Offer a detail word bank with see, hear, feel words so students pick three senses instead of five.
Stretch: Ask students to replace one weak word like nice or big with a stronger sensory word.

Use: Slides 7-8, Video clip 2 (0:00-5:00)

27–50 min **Main activity** 23 min · On their own

Students plan and start a narrative with character, setting, and three ordered events.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 task: pick real, imagined, or mixed spark, draw 3 boxes, write with one sense detail in each part.
2. Show Slide 10 photo prompt: A quiet boat waits at the lake. What happens next in your story? Offer a bike ride choice too.
3. Model a quick 3-box plan on the board with character, setting, and three events in order.
4. Hand out planning sheets and circulate, prompting for First, Next, Finally and one sense detail per box.

STUDENTS DO

1. Choose a spark and sketch and label character, setting, and three events with arrows to show order.
2. Draft 3-5 sentences under the boxes using one sense detail in each part, then read the ending to a partner.
3. Quickly do Worksheet Task E: put events in order to check sequence.

Say: Pick your spark and map it in three boxes: beginning, middle, end. Sketch character and setting, then write each event in order. Put one see, hear, or feel detail in each box and share your ending with your partner.

Worked example: Character: a careful student. Setting: lake path at 4:00 p.m. Beginning - First, the student finds a lost old key on the blacktop. Rusty and cold detail. Middle - Next, the student hears a soft buzz from a backpack and asks, "Are you okay?" End - Finally, the student returns the key to a shopkeeper and feels proud. Each box has order word, action, and one sense detail.

Ask: What are your three events in order? (Beginning, middle, and end with First, Next, Finally that make sense.) · Which sense detail did you add to each part? (One clear see, hear, smell, touch, or taste word per box.)

Check understanding: Partner check: point to boxes and retell in order; if order breaks, add arrows and order words before drafting.

Support: Provide a half-filled plan with character and setting done so students only add events. **Stretch:** Students add a problem and solution box under the events.

Use: Slides 9-10, Worksheet Task E

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

Check conclusions fit events and review key techniques.

YOU DO

1. Read two one-sentence endings for the park cleanup story, one that solves the problem and one that does not connect.
2. Explain that Grade 4 writers are expected to provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events [2].
3. Do Worksheet Task D together orally: fill blanks with dialogue, details, finally, sequence, conclusion.
4. Show Slide 12 exit ticket and have students write two lines to complete.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote which ending fits and explain the clue.
2. Complete Worksheet Task D blanks and write Slide 12 exit: one proud part and one technique to try next time.

Say: A good ending fits the problem. Underline the word that links your ending to the middle problem. Use order and details, then wrap up with feeling or lesson.

Worked example: Story problem: trash everywhere at the park. Weak ending: Then we ate ice cream. Strong ending: Finally, we filled the last bag and felt proud looking at the clean grass. Finally links order, proud shows feeling, and clean grass solves the problem.

Ask: Which ending fits and why? (The one that solves the park problem and follows the events.) · What word shows sequence in your ending? (Finally, Then, or At last to signal the wrap-up.)

Check understanding: Collect exit tickets and sort into Got it, Almost, Needs help on order, details, ending; pull small group tomorrow if endings do not connect.

Support: Give two ending choices to pick from and copy, then add one own word. **Stretch:** Ask students to write two possible endings and explain which fits better.

Use: Slide 12, Worksheet Task D

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Events out of order or missing order words	Middle happens before beginning or Finally appears first	Number boxes 1-2-3 and add First, Next, Finally to lock sequence
Telling without details, like nice, fun, big	No see, hear, or feel words the reader can picture [3]	Add one sense word per box from the word bank and underline it
Ending that does not connect to the problem	Last sentence introduces a new place or problem with no link [2]	Reread middle problem and rewrite ending to solve it and show feeling

Support

- Provide a half-filled plan with character and setting done so students only add events.
- Offer picture cues and a detail word bank and allow three senses instead of five.
- Give order cards First, Next, Then, Finally and sentence starters like At first.

Stretch

- Students add a problem and solution box under the events.
- Students add one line of dialogue that shows feeling without using said.
- Students replace one weak word like nice or big with a stronger sensory word.

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For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit near students who need order support. Help place First, Next, Finally cards, read Task B and E aloud, and scribe one sense detail if writing stalls.

Safety

- Let students choose imagined events and pass on sharing; do not require personal stories.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Put these in order: Finally we went home, First we found a key, Next we asked for help.	First we found a key, Next we asked for help, Finally we went home.
Which detail paints a clearer picture: The room was nice or The room smelled like fresh paint and buzzed?	The room smelled like fresh paint and buzzed.
Which ending fits a story about losing and finding a backpack?	The one where the backpack is found and the student shows relief, not a new unrelated event.

Homework

Add one line of talk to your middle box and underline your best sense word.

Sources

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