Link the Story Chain

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 6
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Creative writing: narratives
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to sequence events and add showing details. They build a paper-chain story and draft a short narrative scene.

Curriculum links

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will sequence real or imagined events from exposition to resolution clearly.
- Students will use dialogue and action as effective technique to move events forward.
- Students will add relevant sensory details that show experience instead of telling it.

Success criteria

- I can order 4-5 events from exposition to resolution.
- I can show feelings with senses and dialogue.
- I can write 8-10 sentences about a real or imagined event.

What students already know

Ask: What is a narrative? Listen for a story about real or imagined events. Ask for one example of a beginning, middle, and end from a recent class story.

Key words

narrative	a story about real or imagined events [14]
event sequence	the order things happen in [14]
descriptive details	words that show what can be seen, heard, and felt [13]
dialogue	talking between people in a story [14]
climax	the biggest, most exciting moment in a story [13]

Materials

- Slides 1-11 projected with sound
- Paper strips, five pre-labeled exposition through resolution, plus blank strips
- Markers and tape for paper chains
- Notebooks and pencils
- Worksheet Task A and Task B, one copy per student
- Timer

Before the lesson

- Test Slides 6 and 8 sound for Video clip 1 (0:00-3:05) and Video clip 3 (0:00-5:00)
- Print Worksheet Task A and Task B for each student
- Pre-label five strips per group: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution
- Put blank strips, markers, and tape in table baskets
- Set timer for sorting and drafting parts

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Lesson outline

0–7 min **Starter** 7 min · Whole class

Hook students and recall what makes a narrative feel real.

YOU DO

1. Welcome the class and say the hook while holding up a short paper chain.
2. Show title and big idea slides and read them aloud.
3. Take a quick vote on the three story hooks to activate ideas about real or imagined events.
4. Link votes to today's goal of building a sequence that does not fall apart.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen and look at the title and big idea.
2. Vote for one hook and tell a partner in one sentence why it grabs them.
3. Share what a narrative needs to feel real.

Say: We are going to link your ideas like a chain — break one link and the story falls apart. Good narratives make readers live every moment. Pick a hook you could turn into a real or imagined story.

Ask: Can narratives be real or imagined, or only real? (Both real and imagined events can be narratives.) · What breaks a story chain? (Events out of order or missing links so it does not flow.)

Check understanding: Hands up for each hook, then cold-call two students to define narrative; reteach with a one-sentence example if unclear.

Support: Show the three hooks in large print and let students point to vote instead of speaking. **Stretch:** Ask students to predict what complication could follow their chosen hook in one sentence.

Use: Slides 1-2, 5

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7–17 min **Teaching - structure** 10 min · Whole class

Teach well-structured event sequences from exposition to resolution.

YOU DO

1. Teach key words and tools for stories using the word and tool slides.
2. Play the video on building event sequence and tell students to listen for orientation, complication, resolution.
3. Model the five-part structure in order: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, since the five-part structure divides a story that way [11].
4. Think aloud your complication question for a rainy-day plan: what goes wrong after school?

STUDENTS DO

1. Repeat and track the five parts on fingers.
2. Watch the video and note orientation, complication, resolution.
3. Turn and talk: what could be the climax, the point of highest emotional intensity [13]?

Say: Narrative writing tells a story by presenting readers with a sequence of events [14]. We will plan exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Ask yourself: what is my complication, and what is my biggest moment?

Worked example: Rainy-day plan mapped in 5 parts: Exposition - A student waits in an empty hallway after school as rain hits the windows. Rising action - The lights flicker, the backpack zipper breaks, papers slide. Climax - The lights go out and something buzzes in the backpack. Falling action - A friend holds a cell phone light while the student gathers papers. Resolution - They laugh, zip the bag with a pencil through the loop, and walk out together.

Ask: What is an event sequence? (The order events happen in.) · Which part is the biggest moment and why does everything lead to it? (The climax, where tension is highest.)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write the five parts in order; review quickly and re-model any missing part with the hallway example if needed.

Support: Provide a five-box strip with the labels and one starter phrase per box to track order. **Stretch:** Ask students to suggest where a flashback to an earlier time could fit without breaking flow [11].

Use: Slides 3-4, 6-7, Video clip 1 (0:00-3:05)

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17–28 min **Teaching - show and talk** 11 min · Whole class

Teach showing details and dialogue that move action forward.

YOU DO

1. Play the video on showing feelings in actions and sense details to borrow.
2. Model telling versus showing with the scared sentence, since writers use show not tell to pull the reader in [13].
3. Model dialogue with action beats between Student A and Student B, because narrative writing often includes dialogue, characters, and a plot [14].
4. Guide pairs to start Worksheet Task A adding dialogue that shows feelings.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch, list one sense detail to borrow.
2. Compare telling versus showing with a partner and highlight the sensory phrase.
3. Begin Worksheet Task A: finish the chat with two lines that show feeling without naming it.

Say: Do not just tell was scared. Show what can be seen, heard, and felt. Let talking move the action forward. Add what hands do, what the air smells like, and how the voice sounds.

Worked example: Telling: The student was scared. Showing step by step: 1. Pick sense - touch and sound. 2. Add strong verb - shook, thumped. 3. Add action beat - Hands shook around the strap while shoes squeaked on the wet floor. 4. Add dialogue - Student A whispered, glancing at the clock, "Did you hear that echo?"

Ask: Which shows: was scared or hands shook? (Hands shook shows through senses and action.) · How should dialogue help the story? (It shows character and moves events forward with character development [6].)

Check understanding: Hold up Task A lines and listen for one sensory phrase and one action beat; model again with My hands and The air smelled starters if weak.

Support: Give a word bank for sight, sound, smell, touch and starters like My hands and The air smelled.
Stretch: Add a contrasting action that hides the feeling, like whistling while hands shake.

Use: Slide 8, Video clip 3 (0:00-5:00), Worksheet Task A

28–50 min **Main activity** 22 min · Groups

Build a well-structured sequence of real or imagined events as a paper chain.

YOU DO

1. Hand out strips, markers, and tape and name the class story: a rainy-day plan after school.
2. Direct each student to write one event on a strip, then have groups organize strips so they connect logically, because narrative writing presents readers with a sequence of events [14].
3. Use Worksheet Task B thinking to check consequences: what happens after the zipper breaks and what happens next.
4. Guide groups to tape the chain, add detail strips, then retell link by link to check flow.

STUDENTS DO

1. Write one event on a strip and one consequence using Task B thinking.
2. Sort strips into exposition through resolution and tape into a paper chain.
3. Retell the story link by link and add two colorful detail strips for sound or texture.

Say: Each person writes one clear event. Then sort them from exposition to resolution. If a link does not connect, move it or rewrite it. Add color, sound, or texture so we can see, hear, and feel it.

Worked example: Chain of 5 links: Exposition - A student waits in the hallway as rain pounds. Rising action - The zipper breaks and homework spills. Climax - Lights flicker out and the backpack buzzes. Falling action - Two friends gather papers by cell phone light. Resolution - They share an umbrella plan and head for the bus. Detail added: cold wet paper, sour rain smell, buzzing like a bee.

Ask: Why did you place this strip as the climax? (It is the biggest moment with highest tension that earlier events build to.) · Which detail is relevant and which can we cut? (Keep details that show senses and move events; cut extras that stop the flow.)

Check understanding: Each group retells in 30 seconds while class checks order; if out of order, group re-sorts before hanging the chain.

Support: Label five strips with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution to guide placement [11]. **Stretch:** Add a second colorful detail strip to two links that shows color, sound, or texture.

Use: Slide 7, Worksheet Task B

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

Review success criteria and check narrative understanding.

YOU DO

1. Hang two strong chains and ask groups to point to the sensory phrase that gives the moment away.
2. Use the hallway prompt to invite one oral what-happens-next sentence with showing detail.
3. Run the quick quiz and exit ticket on paper.
4. Connect back to writing real or imagined events with technique, details, and sequence.

STUDENTS DO

1. Share one chain detail and name its sense.
2. Answer quiz questions and write exit ticket.
3. Self-assess against I can statements with thumbs up or sideways.

Say: Strong stories are individual, original, and compelling to read. A prompt does not have to be something that really happened and can be as abstract as you want. Show the ending insight, not just the bus found.

Ask: Can narratives be real or imagined? (Yes, both.) · What makes imaginative writing work? (When it is individual, original, and compelling to read [9].)

Check understanding: Collect exit tickets and sort into got it and reteach groups; reteach sequence order tomorrow if more than a few miss it.

Support: Offer the sentence frame At first I thought ___, but now I ___ to state the ending insight simply.
Stretch: End with a small image from the beginning, like the sound of rain, to echo the start.

Use: Slides 10-11

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Listing events out of order with no build to a climax	Chain retell jumps or climax comes first	Re-sort using exposition to resolution order and ask what builds tension to the biggest moment [11]
Telling feelings instead of showing senses and actions	Sentences use was scared, was happy with no senses	Rewrite with show not tell to help readers see, hear, and feel what happened [13]
Dialogue that only talks and does not move action	Three lines with no beats or same voice for both speakers	Add action beats and specific word choice, since dialogue, characters, and plot work together [14]

Support

- Label five strips with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution to guide placement
- Give sight, sound, smell, touch word bank plus starters My hands and The air smelled
- Provide frames for dialogue tags and ending insight: At first I thought ___, but now I ___

Stretch

- Add a second colorful detail strip to two links that shows color, sound, or texture
- Add a contrasting action that hides the feeling, like whistling while hands shake
- Start in the middle of the action, then drop in one sentence that hints at what happened earlier

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Support two table groups during main activity: help sort strips into five labeled boxes and prompt one sense word per event. Read Task A and B aloud as needed.

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Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Can narratives be real or imagined?	Both.
What is an event sequence?	The order events happen in.
Which is showing: was scared or hands shook?	Hands shook.

Homework

Write two final sentences for your chain story that show what the experience meant.

Sources

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