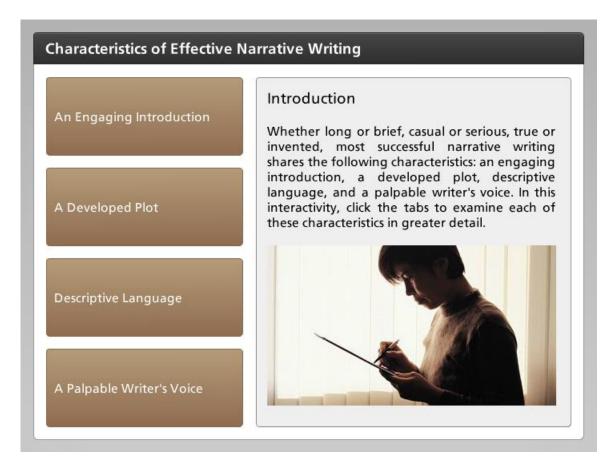
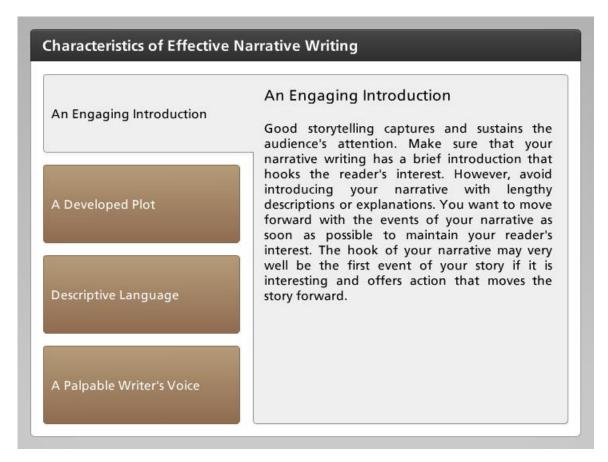
Introduction



Whether long or brief, casual or serious, true or invented, most successful narrative writing shares the following characteristics: an engaging introduction, a developed plot, descriptive language, and a palpable writer's voice. In this interactivity, click the tabs to examine each of these characteristics in greater detail.



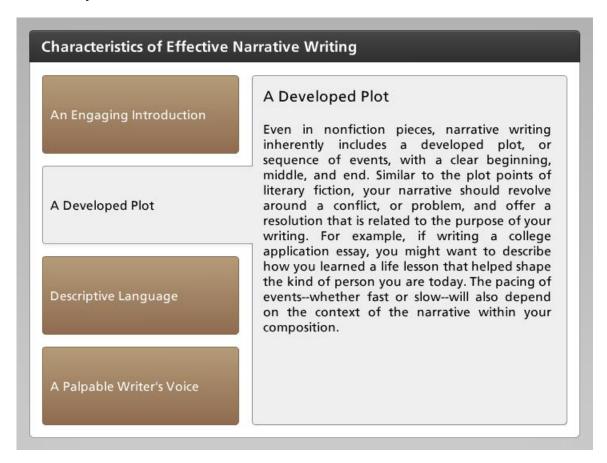
An Engaging Introduction



Good storytelling captures and sustains the audience's attention. Make sure that your narrative writing has a brief introduction that hooks the reader's interest. However, avoid introducing your narrative with lengthy descriptions or explanations. You want to move forward with the events of your narrative as soon as possible to maintain your reader's interest. The hook of your narrative may very well be the first event of your story if it is interesting and offers action that moves the story forward.



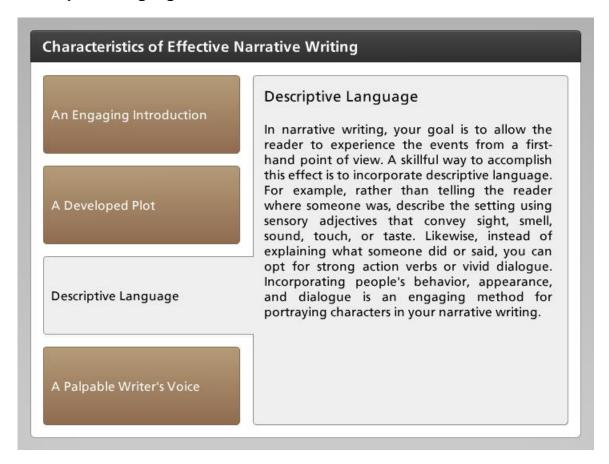
A Developed Plot



Even in nonfiction pieces, narrative writing inherently includes a developed plot, or sequence of events, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Similar to the plot points of literary fiction, your narrative should revolve around a conflict, or problem, and offer a resolution that is related to the purpose of your writing. For example, if writing a college application essay, you might want to describe how you learned a life lesson that helped shape the kind of person you are today. The pacing of events—whether fast or slow—will also depend on the context of the narrative within your composition.



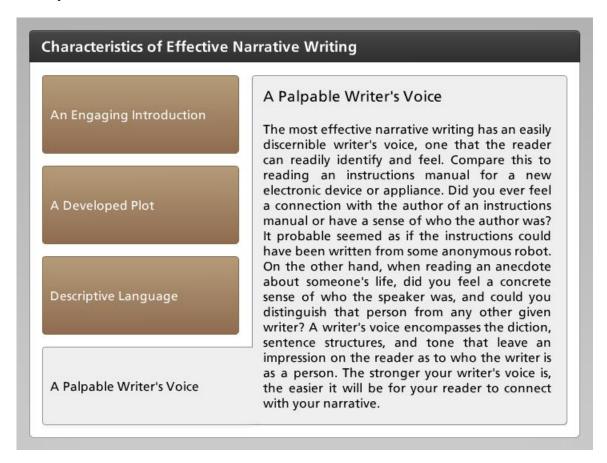
Descriptive Language



In narrative writing, your goal is to allow the reader to experience the events from a first-hand point of view. A skillful way to accomplish this effect is to incorporate descriptive language. For example, rather than telling the reader where someone was, describe the setting using sensory adjectives that convey sight, smell, sound, touch, or taste. Likewise, instead of explaining what someone did or said, you can opt for strong action verbs or vivid dialogue. Incorporating people's behavior, appearance, and dialogue is an engaging method for portraying characters in your narrative writing.



A Palpable Writer's Voice



The most effective narrative writing has an easily discernible writer's voice, one that the reader can readily identify and feel. Compare this to reading an instructions manual for a new electronic device or appliance. Did you ever feel a connection with the author of an instructions manual or have a sense of who the author was? It probable seemed as if the instructions could have been written from some anonymous robot. On the other hand, when reading an anecdote about someone's life, did you feel a concrete sense of who the speaker was, and could you distinguish that person from any other given writer? A writer's voice encompasses the diction, sentence structures, and tone that leave an impression on the reader as to who the writer is as a person. The stronger your writer's voice is, the easier it will be for your reader to connect with your narrative.

