


# Narrative Essay Unit

**Objective:** Students plan and draft narrative essays from scratch, focusing on developing conflict.

**Prompt:** Write a story about a day in the life of a character who has extraordinarily bad luck.

 You can replace this prompt with your own in any activity (or use [our assignment library](#))!

**Duration:** 3–5 class periods, or fewer with homework

## Pre-Write

1–2 class periods



### Quick Write: [Short Story Brainstorm](#)

Students brainstorm about their main characters' desires and challenges to come up with a main conflict.

20-30  
minutes



### Model Essay: ["Love and Limits"](#)

Walk through this story with the class, focusing on how events escalate through the rising action into the climax.

15-20  
minutes

 Try projecting the essay and discussing students' observations as a whole class!



### Graphic Organizer: [Outlining Conflict](#)

Students plot out their story's rising action, climax, and falling action in preparation to write their first drafts.

15–20  
minutes

 Looking for more pre-writing resources? You can find [our full collection here!](#)

## Draft


2–3 class periods



### Guided Draft: [Narrative Essay](#)

Students draft a full narrative essay with the support of targeted tips.

120–180  
minutes

 Before starting to draft, students will see an interactive tutorial for this activity!  
Try projecting the tutorial and going through it as a whole class.

**Rubric:** Beginning of the narrative sets the scene and hints at the conflict and theme  
Middle of the narrative develops a conflict that builds in tension, reaches a climax, and is resolved  
End of the narrative connects the story's conflict with the theme  
Characters are well developed  
Language is vivid and descriptive