

How to Write a Narrative Essay: From Thesis to Final Draft

Step 1: Make your Thesis (your opinion of the topic)

Example: Savannah Nevelow's Thesis = Losing Emma Grace = world-changing 😞

Step 2: Make a Topic (that is the "Point" for Each Body Paragraph) Outline

Instructions: In a Narrative structure, the topics (or "points") are in chronological order, from earliest to most recent in time, as explained in "Chapter: 6 Narration, with Description" in [Structures, 3rd ed.](#)

Example:

Thesis: Losing Emma Grace = world-changing 😞

- I. Meeting Ivan
- II. Falling in love
- III. Pregnant
- IV. Emma Grace born
- V. Losing Emma Grace

Restated Thesis: Therefore, losing Emma Grace 😞

Step 3: Turn your Topic Outline into a Topic Sentence Outline

Example:

Thesis Statement: What I didn't realize was how much he would change my world and how it would affect me, especially when it came to the unexpected loss of my firstborn child.

- I. The first time meeting my child's father was so special that it felt like I was falling.
- II. Falling in love was unexpected and surreal.
- III. Finding out I was pregnant really made him show his true self.
- IV. The week before she was born was completely overwhelming and chaotic.
- V. On October 15, 2014, my whole world changed again.

Restated Thesis Statement: Therefore, I learned that losing a child was the hardest thing I would ever have to go through in life.

Step 4: Make a Tiny Rough Draft from Your Sentence Outline

Instructions: Put all the info of your Sentence Outline in Paragraph form. You'll have

1. your Essay Title, which is a Keyword or Keywords of your Thesis Statement,
2. your Intro paragraph's Thesis Statement,
3. your Body Paragraphs' Topic Sentences, and
4. your Conclusion paragraph's Restated Thesis Statement

Example:

A Hard Lesson Learned

Intro paragraph: What I didn't realize was how much he would change my world and how it would affect me, especially when it came to the unexpected loss of my firstborn child.

First body paragraph: The first time meeting my child's father was so special that it felt like I was falling.

Second body paragraph: Falling in love was unexpected and surreal.

Third body paragraph: Finding out I was pregnant really made him show his true self.

Fourth body paragraph: The week before she was born was completely overwhelming and chaotic.

Fifth body paragraph: On October 15, 2014, my whole world changed again.

Conclusion paragraph: Therefore, I learned that losing a child was the hardest thing I would ever have to go through in life.

Step 5: Expand Your Tiny Rough Draft, Starting with Intro Paragraph

Instructions: Use the information on pages 22-25 in [Structures](#) -- 1) to start your Intro paragraph, 2) to write your Body paragraph's supporting details, and 3) to finish your Conclusion paragraph.

Example (for a minimum **1000 word** rough draft):

A Hard Lesson Learned

Intro paragraph (100 words): It was 2013, which seems like forever ago. This man walked into my life and I was star struck. Feeling like the world had stopped, I knew it was time to talk to him. Talking with him made me realize a lot of things: for one, he was cute, and he just happened to work with my best friend's boyfriend. Of course, I asked lots of questions from my best friend's boyfriend about him, and apparently he did the same thing for me. What little conversation we had felt like an eternity of talking. However, what I didn't realize was how much he would change my world and how it would affect me, especially when it came to the unexpected loss of my firstborn child.

First body paragraph (200-words): The first time meeting my child's father was so special that it felt like I was falling. When he introduced himself, his name was something exotic from another world. It was hard to spell and say, so I just called him Ivan. Ivan was a year older than me. He was a hard worker, funny, and definitely had this sunshine kind of personality. His smile could light up a room. Getting to know him, I realized that he was definitely someone I wanted to be around. We spent a lot of time together and found to have a lot in common. At the time of meeting him, he had a girlfriend that didn't treat him the way he should have been. That was my time to make my move.

Second body paragraph (200-words): Falling in love was unexpected and surreal. After a few months of talking, and after he dumped his girlfriend, we became really close. With all the time we spent together, I really started to like him; he would take me on long rides on his motorcycle. It all felt like a dream. It wasn't until the day he introduced me to his mother that I really felt that amazing spark. It was something out of a fairytale. We became inseparable, spending all our time together. I was in love, and nothing and no one could say anything to change that. Of course, it was still early enough in our relationship that, passing by all the red flags, I didn't realize what kind of man he really was. So it wasn't until when we were six months in our relationship, when I found out that I was pregnant, that things started to change. Who knew that getting pregnant would change my whole world?

Third body paragraph (200 words): Finding out I was pregnant really made him show his true self. He became someone I never expected: he became controlling and verbally abusive and started drinking bottle by bottle. I never saw it coming. I also had to find out the hard fact that he never broke up with his ex-girlfriend and that they were still dating the whole time we were together. Moving back home to my parents was hard for me; he drove two hours just to try to beat the baby out of me. Then he told his mom, and his family told me I had no choice but give the baby up, all because he was not ready to be a father. He kept insisting the baby was not his. Knowing all of this, I still really thought I loved him. But the day I found out I was having a girl, life became so much clearer. There was no way that I was going to give my baby up. I ended it with him and got back together with my previous boyfriend. This happened when I moved home and found out I was pregnant. The current boyfriend was so happy and understanding. We were together all the way up until the day she was born far too early.

Fourth body paragraph (200 words): The week before she was born was completely overwhelming and chaotic. I had to call into both my jobs and explain that I was being hospitalized. I quickly packed a bag and headed to the hospital. I had an emergency C-section a few days later because of stress and preeclampsia. If my readers do not know what that is, it is a complication with pregnant woman. That was the day I almost died, but my daughter was born. On September 18, 2014, Emma Grace was born weighing only fourteen ounces. She was what doctors call a micro preemie. With her being so small, she had to stay in the hospital. The NICU is where the little babies stay when they are too small and can't eat or breathe on their own, and that was where Emma Grace stayed. I was there every day to see her; I spent hours just watching her. She was so small that I couldn't even hold her.

Fifth body paragraph (200 words): On October 15, 2014, my whole world changed again. Emma Grace got really sick with a disease called necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC for short). It is a disease that preemie infants get where the wall of the intestines are invaded by bacteria. Her stomach got so big. At the time, I was home, so the doctors did not call me for nine hours. By that time, she was so sick that they had to transport her from Longview, Texas, to Dallas Texas Children's Hospital because they did not know what to do. As the doctors were bringing her down the elevator, she started to have a hard time breathing. When we finally got out of the building, we took an ambulance and a private jet to get to Dallas as soon as possible. They rushed her into surgery. I spent the night there, and the next morning they told me the surgery did not work. On October 16, her intestines had died. I called as many people as I could so I would not be alone; even my boyfriend drove two hours to say goodbye to our daughter. That was the only day I got to hold her. Before I knew it, she was gone. She weighed one pound and five ounces when she died. At that moment the world had stopped; I could not physically breathe.

Conclusion paragraph (100-words): Therefore, I learned that losing a child was the hardest thing I would ever have to go through in life. Losing my daughter broke me; I was not able to cope or accept that she was gone. I felt guilty, thinking it was my fault because I had not spent every waking moment at the hospital. If you have never lost a child, the pain is out of this world. Losing Emma Grace made me look at the world in different eyes, and that was when I realized that no pain would ever compare to losing my firstborn child.

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Since Nevelow has five body paragraphs, then her essay is longer than 1000 words – it's 1120 words.

Step 6: Transform Your Rough Draft into a Final Draft

Instructions: Revise for body paragraph structure and word count, edit for errors, and format in [MLA Manuscript style](#) for a Final Draft.

Example: see [Nevelow's Narrative Final Draft for "A Hard Lesson Learned"](#).