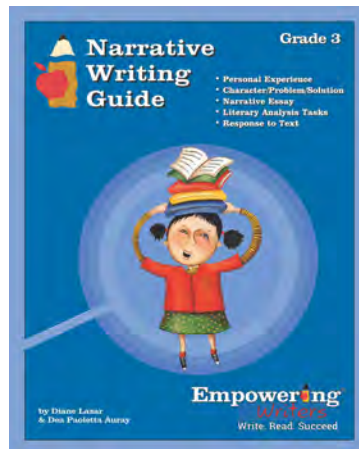




Grade 3 Narrative Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 5: Main Event



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COMPARING SUMMARIES AND FULLY ELABORATED MAIN EVENTS (1)

Read each version of a main event about setting up a fish tank. Think about which one is more entertaining.

1. Dad and I set up my fish tank.
2. First, we placed the tank on a table. Then we filled it with water and laid out the rocks on the bottom. Finally, we added the fish and a cute treasure chest that bubbled.
3. Dad placed the empty rectangle fish tank onto the sturdy table in my room. It was a 20 - gallon tank and could hold at least 12 small fish. I had been asking for a fish tank forever! “Ready sport?” my dad asked. “Time to add the rocks,” he continued. I opened the bag of bright blue rocks and poured them into the tank. With my hands, I smoothed them down to cover the bottom of the tank. The bright blue color will shine nicely in my room, I thought. Next, we anchored the plants. Each plant was a vivid green and looked a little spiky. I had to dig the rocks away and position the plants in the space, then push the rocks back in place. Dad smiled and shook his head. “This is looking good! But it needs one more thing!” he smirked. He stepped out of the room and came back holding a package. What in the world, I wondered. I carefully took it from him and opened it up. A bubbling treasure chest! “Awesome!” I yelled. This would certainly add some excitement in the fish tank. The treasure chest opened and closed. Each time it opened, bubbles came out. The fish are really gonna like this! Grinning from ear to ear, I carefully placed the treasure chest on the bottom of the aquarium. The water came next. Dad set up the hose, ran it right through my window and turned on the water. It filled the fish tank in no time at all. The fish would be the final touch. We had them waiting in a bag. Carefully, I opened the bag and set it on top of the water in the tank just like the salesman said. The fish had to adjust to their new home a little at a time. They bobbed there for a few minutes and then I dipped the bag into the water to mix the old and new water together. Just then, one fish swam out of the bag and into its new home. The other fish followed. My tank was alive with colorful fish! The clown fish swam into the bubbles and right out again. The golden swordtail swam in circles. A neon tetra with blue neon colored scales followed him. Of course, the catfish went right to the bottom and starting feeding. I sat back down on the floor and just gazed into the watery ecosystem with dad. We stared at it for a long time, mesmerized. I put my head on his shoulder and said, “Thank you so much for such a great gift!” We both smiled and watched as the watery world came to life.

Turn and Talk: Which version is a fully elaborated event? Which version is a simple summary? Which version is a grocery list of actions? Which one is the most entertaining to read? Why? Is this a personal experience narrative or character, problem, solution narrative? How do you know?

Name _____

COMPARING SUMMARIES AND FULLY ELABORATED MAIN EVENTS (2)

Read each version of a main event about playing mini-golf. Think about which one is more entertaining.

1. I played mini-golf with my friends.
2. We got to the mini-golf course and got our clubs and balls. Then, we started to play the first hole. My ball went flying into the pond and I had to fish it out. We finished playing and it was fun.
3. “I’ll take the purple ball!” I shouted. “I want the blue one,” yelled my friend. We each grabbed our golf ball and club and headed over to the course. The first hole looked pretty easy. There was a long, green space with a small rock to the left of the hole. On one side was a babbling brook and on the other was a large fish pond. I went first. I placed my golf ball on the marker, took a few practice swings, and then WHACK! I hit the ball hard. It rolled towards the hole, bounced against the side and landed behind the rock. Oh no, I thought. How will I get around the rock and into the hole? My friend was next. She tapped the ball lightly and it rolled forward, but then came right back. We laughed! “Do over!” she shouted and hit the ball a little harder this time. It tilted sideways and landed just in front of the rock. It was my turn again. I squatted down and looked at the hole. Then I moved around the ball and looked again. What if I hit it over the rock, I thought. Maybe it’ll go right into the hole. I took a swing and tapped the ball up. It sailed through the air, over the hole, and SPLASH! It landed right in the pond. We raced over to the pond in time to see the purple ball bobbing up and down. “What should I do?” I asked. “I guess you have to go fishing,” she giggled. I grabbed my club and poked it into the water, but the ball was in the middle of the pond. Looking around, I noticed a net hiding in the grass near the pond. I guess I’m not the first person to hit the ball into the water. Snatching the net, I started to fling it into the pond with little strokes. I kept putting it in and then pulling it back to get the ball to come closer. With each pull, the ball floated closer and closer until I could swipe it up with the net. Shaking it gently, my friend and I went back and finally finished up hole number one. This was going to be a long day, I thought as we moved to hole two and I noticed a large windmill right in the middle of the green.

Turn and Talk: Which version is a fully elaborated event? Which version is a simple summary? Which version is a grocery list of actions? Which one is the most entertaining to read? Why? Is this a personal experience narrative or character, problem, solution narrative? How do you know?

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (1) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

I spent a spring morning walking through the countryside. It was beautiful.

Revise this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do?
S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling.
Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting.
Ask: What did I see, hear, feel, smell?

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (2) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

I caught tadpoles in the pond.

Revise this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do?
S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling.
Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting.
Ask: What did I see, hear, feel, smell, or taste?

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (3) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

I cleaned up the community park with my family.

Revise this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do?
S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling.
Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting.
Ask: What did I see, hear, feel, smell, or taste?

Name _____

BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (4) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

I went ice skating in Central Park.

Revise this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do?
S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling.
Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting.
Ask: What did I see, hear, feel, smell, or taste?

Name _____

The Fledgling

Chirp! Chirp! Tweet! Tweet! Even the birds were happy that spring was finally here. Their songs filled the air as Joe and I walked to the park for baseball practice. It had been a long winter and now it felt so good to be wearing a cotton t-shirt rather than a bulky coat, sneakers instead of heavy boots. Best of all, I'd replaced my ragged red mittens with a soft leather baseball glove.

As we walked, Joe and I talked about our plans for the great summer that lay ahead. We'd spend our days playing baseball and swimming in the community pool. We'd have sleepovers and roast hotdogs around campfires. These were all my favorite things and they were even more exciting when I shared them, my best friend in the whole world. Joe and I had been friends since kindergarten and it seemed we grew more and more alike with each passing year. The only thing about him that sometimes annoyed me was that he was kind of a know-it-all. But nobody's perfect and I really valued my friendship with funny, generous Joe.

We were walking across a grassy field to the baseball diamond when I suddenly spotted a tiny bird huddled on the ground. It had soft, fluffy feathers and round eyes, dark and wide with fear.

"Look," I called to Joe, stooping down beside the helpless creature. "It's a baby bird that's fallen from its nest."

"Leave it alone, Andy," said Joe.

"What?" This was confusing. Joe loved animals as much as I did.

"It's not a baby bird that fell from its nest," he explained. "It's a fledgling, a bird that's learning how to fly. You've got to leave it alone. Let's go."

That didn't make sense to me. Even in our city park, there were hawks

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and other predators who'd love to make a snack of the fragile little bird. Without my help, it would surely die.

"Let's go," Joe urged. "Practice is starting."

I hesitated, unsure about what to do next. Was Joe right? Or was he just being a know-it-all?

Once again, Joe warned me to leave it alone and I could tell he was losing patience with me. Just then, the fledgling chirped. Its song was soft and frail. Suddenly I knew what I had to do. I picked up the young creature and felt a rapid heartbeat pulsing in its chest. I placed it in my baseball mitt where it would be warm and safe.

"I'll be right back," I called over my shoulder to Joe as I started to run back to my house.

He looked disgusted, "You're making a big mistake," he called after me. I didn't think so. Joe was just being a know-it-all once again. Running as fast as I could, I made it back to my house in minutes. Breathlessly, I ran up to my room and found an old shoebox in my closet. I punched holes in the cover so that my little friend would have plenty of fresh air and made it a soft nest of grass. I put a shallow dish full of water into the shoebox and tossed in a handful of bird seed. On my way back from practice, I decided, I'd dig up some worms to feed to my new pet. With my care, the bird would grow up strong and healthy. Then, I'd let it fly free to live out the normal, happy life of a wild bird.

At least, that was my plan. I put the box on a shelf in my room and ran back to the park. When I got back, with a handful of worms in my pocket, the little bird looked weaker. It didn't even have the strength to eat a worm. With each passing hour, the bird looked more sickly. I finally had to ask for help.

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“Andy,” my mom scolded. “You never should have touched that fledgling.”

“But I couldn’t just leave it there to die,” I said.

“Nature knows what she’s doing,” mom explained. “The mother of that baby bird was probably nearby and ready to protect it all along.”

We took the baby bird to the nature center, where the wildlife experts said they’d try to save it. I hung my head in shame as they told me again that I should never have touched the fledgling at all.

So Joe had been right all along. Feeling full of regret, I called him and told him what had happened. He was polite enough not to say, “I told you so,” but I wouldn’t have blamed him if he did. I’d learned that nature really does know what she’s doing and that the helping hands of humans could do our wondrous wildlife more harm than good. I also realized that, while he might not know it all, Joe certainly knew a lot and from now on, I’d always welcome his advice. All I could do now was admit my mistake, cross my fingers and hope that the baby bird survived.

Name _____

LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: MAIN EVENT

You've read the story The Fledgling where the main character has a problem. Write an essay to explain the problem in the story and why the author included this struggle. Be sure to use evidence to support your ideas.

THINK ABOUT IT: Is this a narrative or informational assignment?

Your teacher will walk you through the following STEPS:

1. As a class, read, annotate, analyze, and summarize the story.
2. Fill in the following:
 - Who is the main **point of view character**? _____
 - What is the **setting**? _____
 - What is the main character's **motivation**? (What does she/he want?) _____
 - What is the **conflict**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) _____
 - Fill in the summarizing framework that outlines the **plot**.

This story is about _____ .
The problem / adventure / experience _____ .
The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when _____ .

- What is the **theme**? _____
3. Consider the task:
 - Who is the main character?
 - What was the problem or adventure?
 - How did the main character struggle with the problem or go through the adventure?
 - Why did the author include this struggle?
 4. Your teacher will MODEL this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

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SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The reader discovers that_____.
- The problem that arises _____.
- The main character handled this struggle by _____.
- The author included this struggle because _____.
- The adventure was _____.
- The main character _____.
- We see that_____.
- The author reveals_____.
- In this story_____.
- The reader sees this when_____.
- In the story, evidence suggests that_____.
- It isn't long before we discover_____.
- Through the text we learn that_____.
- In paragraph _____ we see that _____.
- We know this because _____.
- We see this when_____.

