



# Writing Personal Narratives

Using Narrative Non-Fiction Picture Books as  
Inspiration for Telling Your Story

(Grades 3 and up)

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**FREE PDF Includes:**

Lesson Plan    Activity Sheets    Video Link

Watch the video at <https://caroleedeanbooks.blogspot.com/2021/07/childrens-author-panel-on-promoting.html>



## LESSON PLAN – WRITING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE (for grades 3 and up)

### PART 1 - REMINISCING

**Purpose:** Westby and Culatta (2016) talk about four strategies for creating personal narratives. One of them is reminiscing which is discussed in more detail in the book *Story Frames for Teaching Literacy* Chapter 12. That book is not needed for these activities but will provide a deeper exploration of the process and as well as many additional supports for narrative intervention.

For this activity, students will share a story with a family member and then ask a question to stimulate a conversation.

#### Directions:

1. Read the selected book in class (*Magic Ramen, An Inconvenient Alphabet, or Counting on Katherine*).
2. Have students practice retelling the story (see strategies for retelling in *Story Frames for Literacy: Enhancing Student Learning Through the Power of Storytelling* which includes a complete narrative analysis of the three books featured here. Learn more at <https://products.brookespublishing.com/Story-Frames-for-Teaching-Literacy-P1238.aspx>).
3. Instruct students to do the following at home:
  - a. Retell the story to a family member.
  - b. Ask the question on the activity sheet and discuss the answer with the same family member.
  - c. Write a response or draw a picture reflecting the answer.

Watch the video where these authors talk about their books at <https://caroleedeanbooks.blogspot.com/2021/07/childrens-author-panel-on-promoting.html>

Reference: Westby, C. & Culatta, B. (2016). Telling tales: Personal event narratives and life stories. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*. 47, 260-282.

### PART 2 – WRITING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Students use the reminiscing activity to create their own story or a descriptive paragraph. The story may be about their personal experiences or the personal experiences of someone they know. Various templates and downloadable resources are available for this purpose in *Story Frames*, Chapter 12.

REPRODUCIBLE ACTIVITY SHEETS ARE ON THE NEXT THREE PAGES. THERE IS A BLANK SHEET AT THE END THAT MAY BE USED FOR ADDITIONAL BOOKS.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Your student recently read the book below in class. Ask your student to tell you about the book, and then discuss the questions below.

**Title:** *Magic Ramen: The Story of Momofuko Ando*  
**Author:** Andrea Wang **Illustrator:** Kana Urbanowicz

**Summary:** After World War II, people in Japan must wait in long lines for food. Momofuko Ando decides to create a special noodle that is healthy and easy to prepare.

**Question:** Have you or someone you know ever tried to invent something new and failed the first time? Did you keep trying or decide it wasn't worth the trouble? If you kept trying, how did it turn out?

**Answer:**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Your student recently read the book below in class. Ask your student to tell you about the book, and then discuss the questions below.

**Title:** *Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13*

**Author:** Helaine Becker

**Illustrator:** Dow Phumirik

**Summary:** Katherine Johnson was one of the “computers” from the movie *Hidden Figures* (Melfi, 2016). She overcame both sexism and racism to become a NASA mathematician and was instrumental in bringing the Apollo 13 astronauts back to earth after an explosion damaged their spaceship.

**Question:** Have you or someone you know ever been told you couldn’t do something important to you? How did you react? Have you or someone you know ever had to use math to solve an important problem?

**Answer:**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Your student recently read the book below in class. Ask your student to tell you about the book, and then discuss the questions below.

**Title:** *An Inconvenient Alphabet: Ben Franklin and Noah Webster's Spelling Revolution*

**Author:** Beth Anderson

**Illustrator:** Elizabeth Baddeley

**Summary:** Benjamin Franklin and Noah Webster try to create a spelling system that is simpler and easier to understand and use. People don't want to make the changes, but these efforts lead to the creation of Webster's *First American Dictionary of the English Language*.

**Question:** Have you ever had an idea that was really important to you but other people didn't understand it? Was there at least one person who understood your idea and liked it? How did it turn out?

**Answer:**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Your student recently read the book below in class. Ask your student to tell you about the book, and then discuss the questions below.

**Title:**

**Author:**

**Summary:**

**Question:**

**Answer:**

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