Writing a Narrative Essay

A narrative essay tells a story. It is considered a reflection or an exploration of the author’s values told as a story. The author may write a story about the past (a memorable person or event) or even observe the present. Relax, you are basically just telling a story to someone, something you probably do every day in casual conversation.

Get the basic story down and then turn it into an essay. You might even want to either tape record your story as if you were telling it to someone for the first time or actually tell it to a friend. Remember that it has to be a story. Get it organized before you work on word choice. In a successful narrative essay, the author usually makes a point.

Points to consider:

- Indicate what kind of narrative essay it is in your introduction (whether it is about a person, event, or in the past or present, etc)
- Involve readers in your story. Recreate the incident instead of just telling about it
- Find a generalization that the story supports. Then it will take on meaning. It doesn’t have to encompass humanity as a whole. You can make it geared toward a certain audience (women, children, doctors, etc.)
- Details must be carefully selected to support, explain, and enhance the story
- The point of view is usually in first person. You can use third person (he, she, they), but it is not as personal or intimate.
- Be lively and show style. Describe ideas in new ways. AVOID USING CLICHES!

Narrative essays are ones that do not have to be so structured and formal, so have fun writing your essay!