

# American Heritage School



## Classical Writing

By Julie Bouche

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## Classical Writing Part I

*“And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”*

**– 2 Nephi 25:26**

### Course Description

The theme scripture for this course comes from 2 Nephi 25: 26 and says, “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.” The emphasis for the class will be the mastery of the written word. We know through the scriptures and revelations from modern prophets that writing is a crucial part of the Lord’s plan to make his word known to his people. As Latter-day Saints, our ability to express our testimonies and our knowledge of the gospel will become more and more crucial as we prepare the world for the coming of the Savior through missionary work. We want, as Nephi, to be able to say that we “have written what (we) have written, and (we) esteem it of great worth, and especially unto (our) people” (2 Nephi 33:3).

### Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate their mastery of the curriculum through the following tasks:

1. Show comprehension of the course principles through written texts.
2. Show mastery of grammar principles through writing and course exams.
3. Demonstrate reasoning, relating, and recording skills through written texts and reflections
4. Relate through personal reflections.
5. Record through various writing assignments that follow the Classical Writing patterns established over the centuries.

### Course Format

American Heritage School strives to make available three kinds of distance education. Availability of these three kinds of courses varies, depending on the course subject and instructor. This course will be offered as an Independent Study and a Home School course.

Independent Study Course. American Heritage School's copyrighted online or print curricula (materials that are not licensed to share or re-sell) will be provided for family use. The course also includes teacher-graded assignments and computer-generated feedback.

**Course Texts**

Students are required to read the following course texts. These pieces have been selected to allow students to explore the course theme: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”

--2 Nephi 25:26

Most of the texts will be short and provided online through the course platform. However, there will be one text that will need to be purchased.

*Rex Barks: Diagramming Sentences Made Easy* by Phyllis Davenport and Lisa VanDamme. (2004) **ISBN-10:** 1889439355 **ISBN-13:** 978-1889439358

**Course Assignments**

**Discussion Boards:** Discussions make up a large portion of the student’s grade, and are used for various assignments. Students should post early and check back often to participate in the class discussions.

**Notebook Pages:** The notebook of each student is not just a well organized compilation of assignments; rather, it is a product of his/her creativity, insights, and progress. It is a permanent record of the researching, reasoning, relating, and recording that causes a student to become an “active producer” rather than a “passive consumer.” The assignments outlined in this course are designed to guide students on this journey.

**Memorizations:** In this course you will have opportunities to memorize selections from great writers.

**Progymnasmata Assignments:** These assignments are the core of Classical Writing. They follow the pattern set down by the ancient Greeks and follow an apprenticeship model. We will be looking at texts that exemplify quality writing and using those structures to influence our own writing.

**Grading: Point Breakdown**

Grades are broken down into three categories:

Participation/Reflections	40%
Progymnasmata Writing	30%
Grammar	30%

**Participation/Reflections:** This grade covers the majority of the day-to-day work that will be done for this class. Time spent watching lessons, posts to the discussion boards, reflection writing assignments, and completing assignments on-time all contribute to this portion of the student's grade.

**Progymnasmata Writing:** Once the foundation work has been completed, students will submit final, polished work to demonstrate their understanding of the form and content of the different categories.

**Grammar:** While mastery of grammatical principles will be a crucial aspect of all the writing assignments, basic understanding of core elements will also be observed through formal assessments.

### **Grading: Scale**

A = 100% - 95%	C = 76% - 74%
A- = 94% - 90%	C- = 73% - 70%
B+ = 89% - 87%	D+ = 69% - 67%
B = 86% - 84%	D = 66% - 64 %
B- = 83% - 80%	D - = 63% - 60%
C+ = 79% - 77%	F = 59% - 0%

\* = With Special Accommodation

### **Self-Government Grade**

O = Outstanding

- Demonstrates exceptional effort and work ethic; and
- Makes significant or frequent contributions to the class; and
- Completes and submits all in-class and homework assignments on time, unless otherwise excused by the instructor; and
- Does not require more than one warning from faculty or administration to improve specifically identified misbehavior.

G = Good

- Demonstrates good effort and work ethic; and
- Makes occasional contributions to the class; and
- Completes and submits most in-class and homework assignments on time; and
- Generally does not require more than two (but occasionally more) warnings from faculty or administration to improve specifically identified misbehavior.

MS = Minimum Standard

- Demonstrates a minimal level of effort and work ethic; and
- Makes very few contributions to the class; and

- Submits most in-class and homework assignments, but not in a complete or timely way; and
- Requires multiple warnings from faculty or administration to improve specifically identified misbehavior.

BM = Below Minimum Standard

- Demonstrates an unacceptable level of effort and work ethic; or
- Does not contribute to the class; or
- Consistently neglects to submit in-class or homework assignments.

### **Strategies for Success**

- View all PowerPoint presentations and keep a notebook of important concepts, insights, and reflections.
- Complete each written assignment for each of the lessons. Don't begin the next set of assignments until you have completed the previous one.
- Participate in the course weekly and stay on recommended schedule. Don't fall behind.
- Become familiar with the 6 Traits rubric and review it each time before submitting a written assignment.
- Make goals with definite dates for when you would like to complete each assignment. Adjust these goals if you are unable to meet them.
- Communicate questions, concerns, and insights frequently and in a timely manner with the instructor.

### **Instructor Contact Information**

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## Classical Writing Part A: Weekly Calendar

### Week 1

- Introduction to Classical Writing
- Introduction to Narrative
- Narrative: Dickens
- Grammar Week 1

### Week 2

- Narrative: Nephi
- Narrative: Joseph Smith History
- Grammar Week 2

### Week 3

- Narrative: Samuel Whitman
- Narrative: Thomas S. Monson
- Grammar Week 3

### Week 4

- Introduction to Description
- Description: Stephen Crane
- Description: Willa Cather
- Grammar Week 4

### Week 5

- Description: David McCullough
- Description: Carl Bloch
- Grammar Week 5

### Week 6

- Description: J.W. Waterhouse
- Description: Monet
- Grammar Week 6
- Writer's Notebook Week 6

### Week 7

- Introduction to Fable
- Fable: Ant and Grasshopper
- Fable: Bear and Travelers
- Fable: Eagle and Fox

- Fable: Serpent and Eagle
- Grammar Week 7
- Writer's Notebook Week 7

#### Week 8

- Fable: Frogs and the Well
- Fable: James Thurber
- Fable: Oak and the Reed Grammar
- Week 8
- Writer's Notebook Week 8

#### Week 9

- Fable: Good Samaritan
- Fable: Invent Characters
- Fable: Invent Situations
- Fable: Write Your Own
- Grammar Week 9
- Writer's Notebook Week 9

#### Week 10

- Introduction to Proverb
- Proverb: Chinese Proverbs
- Proverb: Poor Richard's Almanac
- Proverb: Biblical Proverbs
- Grammar Week 10
- Writer's Notebook Week 10

#### Week 11

- Proverb: Contradictions
- Proverb: Collecting Proverbs
- Proverb: Fable to Moral
- Grammar Week 11
- Writer's Notebook Week 11

#### Week 12

- Introduction to Anecdote
- Contemporary Anecdotes
- Grammar Week 12
- Writer's Notebook Week 12

### Week 13

- Anecdote: Historical Anecdotes
- Grammar Week 13
- Writer's Notebook Week 13

### Week 14

- Introduction to Confirmation/Refutation
- Confirmation/Refutation: Basic Confirmation
- Confirmation/Refutation: Initial Questions
- Grammar Week 14
- Writer's Notebook Week 14

### Week 15

- Confirmation/Refutation: Outline
- Confirmation/Refutation: Draft
- Grammar Week 15
- Writer's Notebook Week 15

### Week 16

- Confirmation/Refutation: Basic Refutation
- Confirmation/Refutation: Intermediate Questions
- Grammar Week 16
- Writer's Notebook Week 16

### Week 17

- Confirmation/Refutation: Research and Outline
- Confirmation/Refutation: Final Draft
- Grammar Week 17
- Writer's Notebook Week 17

### Week 18

- Portfolio Preparation and Submission



## **Grammar Assignments: Classical Writing**

### **Week 1:**

Read pages 6-6a on why we study the sentence. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 7-11 on Parts of Speech. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete the short exercises as you go.

Read page 12 on the basics of sentence diagramming. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 2-1 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 1.

### **Week 2:**

Read page 12 (2-A) on Helping Verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 12-13 (2-B) on Questions. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 2-2 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 2.

### **Week 3**

Read pages 14-17 (2-C) on Modifiers: Adjectives and Adverbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 3.

### **Week 4**

Read pages 18-22 (2-D) on Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 2-6, 2-7, and 2-8 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 4.

### **Week 5**

Read page 22 (2-E) on Coordinating Conjunctions. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 22-23 (2-F) on Compound Elements. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 23-24 (2-G) on Understood “You.” Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 24 (2-H) on Interjections. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 25 (2-I) on Introductory Words. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 2-9 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 5.

## Week 6

Familiarize yourself with the graphic on page 27.

Read page 28 on the Three Kinds of verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 28-29 (3-A) on Intransitive Complete Verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read page 29-32 (3-B) on Transitive Active Verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 6.

## Week 7

Read pages 32-38 (3-C) on Transitive Passive Verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8, 3-9, and 3-10 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 7.

## Week 8

Read pages 39-41 (3-D) on Intransitive Linking Verbs. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 3-11, 3-12, 3-13, 3-14, 3-15, 3-16, 3-17, 3-18, and 3-19 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 8.

## Week 9

Mid-Term Exam.

## Week 10

Read pages 46-48 on Dependent Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 48-52 (4-A) on Adverb Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 in your Notebook.

Read pages 53-60 (4-B) on Adjective Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, and 4-9 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 10.

## Week 11

Read pages 60-61 (4-C) on Noun Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 4-10, 4-11, 4-12, and 4-13 in your Notebook.

Read page 67 on Verbals. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 67-70 (5-A) on Gerunds. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 5-1 and 5-2 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 11.

## Week 12

Read pages 71-76 (5-B) on Participles. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 5-3, 5-4, 5-5, and 5-6 in your Notebook.

Read pages 76-79 (5-C) on Infinitives. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercises 5-7 and 5-8 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 12.

## Week 13

Read page 80 on Additional Instructions. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 80-81 (6-A) on Appositives. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 6-1 in your Notebook.

Read pages 81-82 (6-B) on Objective Complements. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 6-2 in your Notebook.

Read pages 82-85 (6-C) on Adverbial Nouns. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 6-3 in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 13.

#### Week 14

Read pages 87-88 on Compound and Complex Sentences. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook. Complete exercise 7-1 in your Notebook.

Read pages 89-90 (8-A) on Adjective Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 14.

#### Week 15

Read pages 90-92 (8-B) on Adverb Clauses. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 92-95 (8-C) on Pronouns. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 15.

#### Week 16

Read pages 95-97 (8-D) on Prepositional Phrases. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Read pages 97-98 (8-E) on Nouns. Mark and annotate, or take notes in your Notebook.

Complete the Quiz for Week 16.

#### Week 17

Final Exam.



## Narrative

When we talk about narratives, we are talking about the most basic form of communication. Everyone knows how to tell a tale of what happened—what you did today, what happened at the movie last night, what the plot of your favorite novel is. However, we want our narratives to be excellent, and in order to do so, we have to look deeply at a variety of elements that go into a narrative. We will do this through condensing, expanding, and imitating samples of quality writing.

Narratives often cover what we call the “journalist questions”—the who, what, when, where, why, and how of an incident. Rhetoricians (or those who are masters of rhetoric) use “narratio” to state facts as they persuade. It’s not just Rhetoricians, though. Others use narration as well, from historians to storytellers, from attorneys to poets.

There is an important understanding when it comes to narrative, however. As simple as it may seem, narratives have a narrator. In other words, the event or story is told through the eyes of someone. This person has experiences, knowledge, biases, and beliefs that affect the way they tell a story. Some of the different “twists” that narratives can be told from are:

- ❖ Slant—take a different spin by writing it from a different point of view.
- ❖ Direct Declarative—just telling it like it is (if the original does not already)
- ❖ Indirect Declarative—purposely overdone, often using passive voice (It is said that...)
- ❖ Interrogative—asking questions that tell the story (Why did I lash out so?)
- ❖ Comparative—purposely overdone (Instead of....Although....In contrast...)

As we go through these different forms, I want you to think of these as building muscles, expanding stamina, developing skills. Because of that, there will be a variety of levels to the assignments. We will usually start small, either with a quick-write, a brainstorming activity, or some other activity intended to get you thinking. Then, we will work with the text on a basic level, developing your understanding of the rules and arrangements that dictate each form. Next, we will do the advanced work, most often composing your own original work. Finally, we will conclude with some lower-intensity work, often looking at style and aesthetics. If it helps, visualize a workout routine—warm-ups, aerobic exercises, anaerobic exercises, and cool-downs. Now, there may be some variance in these activities, but the idea is to take you through the processes until you are comfortable with them. Embrace the repetition.

Start by scanning over the passage and the assignment to get an idea of what you will be expected to do. Then, read the passage and follow the instructions. You will be instructed on what I want you to submit, what I want you to post to the discussion boards, etc.



## Narrative Sample

### Charles Dickens

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including-which is a bold word- the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-year's dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change-not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said 'Pooh, pooh.' and closed it with a bang.

*(A Christmas Carol, pg 19-20, 385 words)*

#### Part I

Answer the journalist's questions about this narrative:

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why:

How:

Condense the narrative down to around 100 words.

Part II:

Expand the narrative again to around 300 words without looking at the original. Feel free to add your own descriptive writing to fill in the details.

Part III:

Rewrite the original (or the expanded version you wrote) with a twist. Use around 300 words and choose one (or more) of these:

- ❖ Slant—make the narrative tell a particular sort of story, a different “take” or “spin” from what is in the original. Think of how a reporter can reveal his bias in his reporting.
- ❖ Direct Declarative—just telling it like it is (if the original does not already)
- ❖ Indirect Declarative—purposely overdone, often using passive voice (It is said that...)
- ❖ Interrogative—asking questions that tell the story (Why did I lash out so?)
- ❖ Comparative—purposely overdone (Instead of....Although....In contrast...)

Part IV

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

Original:

Imitation:

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:



## Narrative Sample

### 1 Nephi

And it came to pass that when Laban saw our property, and that it was exceedingly great, he did lust after it, insomuch that he thrust us out, and sent his servants to slay us, that he might obtain our property.

And it came to pass that we did flee before the servants of Laban, and we were obliged to leave behind our property, and it fell into the hands of Laban.

And it came to pass that we fled into the wilderness, and the servants of Laban did not overtake us, and we hid ourselves in the cavity of a rock.

And it came to pass that Laman was angry with me, and also with my father; and also was Lemuel, for he hearkened unto the words of Laman. Wherefore Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us even with a rod.

And it came to pass as they smote us with a rod, behold, an angel of the Lord came and stood before them, and he spake unto them, saying: Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold ye shall go up to Jerusalem again, and the Lord will deliver Laban into your hands.

And after the angel had spoken unto us, he departed.

And after the angel had departed, Laman and Lemuel again began to murmur, saying: How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands? Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty; then why not us?

(1 Nephi 3:25-31, 288 words)

Part I

Answer the journalist's questions about this narrative:

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why:

How:

Condense the narrative down to around 100 words.

Part II:

Expand the narrative again to around 300 words without looking at the original. Feel free to add your own descriptive writing to fill in the details.

Part III:

Rewrite the original (or the expanded version you wrote) with a twist. Use around 300 words and choose one (or more) of these:

- ❖ Slant—make the narrative tell a particular sort of story, a different “take” or “spin” from what is in the original. Think of how a reporter can reveal his bias in his reporting.
- ❖ Direct Declarative—just telling it like it is (if the original does not already)
- ❖ Indirect Declarative—purposely overdone, often using passive voice (It is said that...)
- ❖ Interrogative—asking questions that tell the story (Why did I lash out so?)
- ❖ Comparative—purposely overdone (Instead of....Although....In contrast...)

Part IV

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

Original:

Imitation:

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:



## **Narrative Sample from Joseph Smith-History**

So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

*(JSH1:14-17, 331 words)*

Part I

Answer the journalists questions about this narrative:

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

Condense the 330+ words to about 100 words:

**Part II**

Expand the narrative again to 300 words from your condensed version without looking at the original:

**Part III**

**Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original**

**Original:**

**Imitation:**

**Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:**



## Narrative

### Samuel T. Whitman

The story of the iron wedge began years ago when the white-haired farmer [who now inhabited the property on which it stood] was a lad on his father's homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about. ...

On this particular day, it was a faller's wedge—wide, flat, and heavy, a foot or more long, and splayed from mighty poundings [—which the lad found] ... in the south pasture. [A faller's wedge, used to help fell a tree, is inserted in a cut made by a saw and then struck with a sledge hammer to widen the cut.] ... Because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge ... between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

He truly meant to, but he never did. [The wedge] was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree. ... Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

In the chill silence of that wintry night ... one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss. ...

Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. "The wedge," he muttered reproachfully. "The wedge I found in the south pasture." A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing, edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should.

(In Conference Report, Apr. 1966, p. 70, 357 words)

Part I

Answer the journalists questions about this narrative:

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

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Condense the 350+ words to about 100 words:

Part II

Expand the narrative again to 300-350 words from your condensed version without looking at the original:

Part III

Using this narrative as a guide, identify a way that you can relate to the moral of this story. Write a 300-350 word narrative of your own experience that communicates the same message.

Part IV

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

Original:

Imitation:

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:



# **Narrative**

## **Thomas S. Monson**

Read the Conference talk “Mrs. Patton Continues” by President Monson. I’m not giving you a direct narrative this time—this assignment will ask you to sort through the talk to identify the parts of the narrative on a larger scale.

### Part I

Answer the journalists questions about this narrative:

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

Condense the 350+ words to about 100 words:

### Part II

Expand the narrative again to 300-350 words from your condensed version without looking at the original:

### Part III

President Monson is an excellent story-teller. Look back at this talk and consider what makes his stories so great to listen to. Write a 250-300 word analysis of this talk, and any other talk given by President Monson that includes a narrative, wherein you identify specific strategies that he uses and what the effect of those strategies are.

**Part IV**

**Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original**

**Original:**

**Imitation:**

**Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:**



## Description

The use of description in writing can often times make the difference between connecting with your readers and leaving them apathetic. You've heard the old adage, "Show, don't tell!" when it comes to your writing. Our goal is to paint a picture in the minds of your readers. Help them to see what you see, hear what you hear, feel what you feel. We want vivid images and powerful phrases. Description requires you to strike a balance between aesthetics and accuracy, between elaboration and clarity.

Look at the difference between these two:

"It was stormy out on the moor."

"A strong wind sang sadly as it bent the trees in front of the Hall. A half-moon shone through the dark, flying clouds on to the wild and empty moor."

The first example is straight forward. The second example is from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. There is a clear difference in these two. One tells us what is happening. One paints a picture, draws us in, makes us feel as though we are there looking out the window at the storm. In order to achieve excellence in writing, you must learn how to use description well.

As we go through Description, there are some basic categories we can look at:

**Descriptions of time:** a terrible hour, Christmas Eve, the first frost, or supper time.

"Christmas Eve dinner takes place at my mother's home—a place each of us lived in, though for varying amounts of time. Preparations begin hours before the actual meal, with the sounds of Christmas movies, laughing, and reminiscing filling the air as we cut chicken, peel potatoes, and otherwise prepare the German meal that is traditional for our family's Christmas Eve dinner together."

**Descriptions of places:** a battlefield, a cathedral, a pond, or our kitchen.

"Granny's kitchen was small, but sufficient. Every cupboard space was utilized, though never to excess. Caricatures of animals, lovingly painted by hand, adorned the cupboard doors—Granny's only real expression of her own joys and loves. The kitchen was her area, and Gramps knew better than to meddle in her realm. It was there that I learned how to make homemade bread, homemade jam, vegetable soup, and root beer frosties."

**Descriptions of actions:** a predawn raid, a great procession, the hatching of a turtle-egg nest, or proper way to make Apple Strudel.

"There is a finesse to the way my mom makes Apple Strudel. She slices the apples thin and symmetrical, making sure they will cook all the way through. The layers of spices and sugar are layered with sweeping gestures over the expanse of dough. She senses, somehow, the distance needed to fold the dough over the ingredients, and always manages to roll the pastry tight enough to fit exactly into the pan."

**Descriptions of persons:** the drummer boy, a bishop, a little girl fishing, or Mom.

"Granny's hands are what I remember the most. They were soft and cool—surprising for the wife of a farmer who had spent the last 20 years of her life living by the sweat of her brow. Her glasses changed once that I can remember from horn-rims to circular. Her smile changed too when she moved from partials to full dentures. But her hands never changed. She was quick to use those hands to bind wounds, wipe tears, or reassure."

**Descriptions of things:** a cannon, a censer, the pond, our dinner table.

"Growing up I remember only having two different dinner tables. The first was a long rectangular shape with rounded edges. It bore the look of a dark walnut, but further examination (particularly from small children climbing under the table) revealed a composite wood covered in a faux finish. The other, that expands to sit 14 people, is oval in shape and made of a stained pine. The look and materials, however, are the least important thing about these tables. What makes them special is the amount of time my family spent around them, talking about everything from what we did that day to deeper philosophical topics such as faith and belief."

As you work with Description, keep in mind that your job is to help your reader connect with what you are writing. Use enough detail to paint a picture, but not so much that they become lost in the details. Again, it is a tenuous balance, but important to work on that balance now.



## Description

### Stephen Crane

“He became aware that the furnace roar of the battle was growing louder. Great blown clouds had floated to the still heights of air before him. The noise, too, was approaching. The woods filtered men and the fields became dotted.

As he rounded a hillock, he perceived that the roadway was now a crying mass of wagons, teams, and men. From the heaving tangle issued exhortations, commands, imprecations. Fear was sweeping it all along. The cracking whips bit and horses plunged and tugged. The white-topped wagons strained and stumbled in their exertions like fat sheep.

The youth felt comforted in a measure by this sight. They were all retreating. Perhaps, then, he was not so bad after all. He seated himself and watched the terror-stricken wagons. They fled like soft, ungainly animals. All the roarers and lashers served to help him to magnify the dangers and horrors of the engagement that he might try to prove to himself that the thing with which men could charge him was in truth a symmetrical act. There was an amount of pleasure to him in watching the wild march of this vindication.

Presently the calm head of a forward-going column of infantry appeared in the road. It came swiftly on. Avoiding the obstructions gave it the sinuous movement of a serpent. The men at the head butted mules with their musket stocks. They prodded teamsters indifferent to all howls. The men forced their way through parts of the dense mass by strength. The blunt head of the column pushed. The raving teamsters swore many strange oaths.

The commands to make way had the ring of a great importance in them. The men were going forward to the heart of the din. They were to confront the eager rush of the enemy. They felt the pride of their onward movement when the remainder of the army seemed trying to dribble down this road. They tumbled teams about with a fine feeling that it was no matter so long as their column got to the front in time. This importance made their faces grave and stern. And the backs of the officers were very rigid.”

*(The Red Badge of Courage, 360 words)*

#### Part I

Think of a single scene you are familiar with (baseball practice, swimming in the summer, family dinner conversations around the table, etc.). For your scene, write down a few notes for what you might describe for:

Time:

Place:

Action:

Person:

Thing:

**Part II:**

Using the excerpt from Stephen Crane as a guide (try to imitate the feel of his writing, the sentence structure, etc.), write your own description based on the notes you wrote for Part I. Limit your passage to less than 300 words.

**Part III:**

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

Original:

Imitation:

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:



## Description

### Willa Cather

“Early the next morning I ran out-of-doors to look about me. I had been told that ours was the only wooden house west of Black Hawk--until you came to the Norwegian settlement, where there were several. Our neighbours lived in sod houses and dugouts--comfortable, but not very roomy. Our white frame house, with a storey and half-storey above the basement, stood at the east end of what I might call the farmyard, with the windmill close by the kitchen door. From the windmill the ground sloped westward, down to the barns and granaries and pig-yards. This slope was trampled hard and bare, and washed out in winding gullies by the rain. Beyond the corncribs, at the bottom of the shallow draw, was a muddy little pond, with rusty willow bushes growing about it. The road from the post-office came directly by our door, crossed the farmyard, and curved round this little pond, beyond which it began to climb the gentle swell of unbroken prairie to the west. There, along the western sky-line it skirted a great cornfield, much larger than any field I had ever seen. This cornfield, and the sorghum patch behind the barn, were the only broken land in sight. Everywhere, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but rough, shaggy, red grass, most of it as tall as I.

North of the house, inside the ploughed fire-breaks, grew a thick-set strip of box-elder trees, low and bushy, their leaves already turning yellow. This hedge was nearly a quarter of a mile long, but I had to look very hard to see it at all. The little trees were insignificant against the grass. It seemed as if the grass were about to run over them, and over the plum-patch behind the sod chicken-house.

As I looked about me I felt that the grass was the country, as the water is the sea. The red of the grass made all the great prairie the colour of winestains, or of certain seaweeds when they are first washed up. And there was so much motion in it; the whole country seemed, somehow, to be running.”

(*My Antonia*, 359 words)

#### Part I

Think of a place you are familiar with (your bedroom, a place you spent your summers, the street you live on, etc.). For your setting, write down a few notes for what you might describe for:

Time:

Place:

Action:

Person:

Thing:

**Part II:**

Using the excerpt from Willa Cather as a guide (try to imitate the feel of her writing, the sentence structure, etc.), write your own description based on the notes you wrote for Part I. Limit your passage to less than 300 words.

**Part III:**

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

**Original:**

**Imitation:**

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:



## Description

### David McCullough

“George III had been twenty-two when, in 1760, he succeeded to the throne, and to a remarkable degree he remained a man of simple tastes and few pretensions. He liked plain food and drank but little, and wine only. Defying fashion, he refused to wear a wig. That the palace at St. James's had become a bit dowdy bothered him not at all. He rather liked it that way. Socially awkward at Court occasions -- many found him disappointingly dull -- he preferred puttering about his farms at Windsor dressed in farmer's clothes. And in notable contrast to much of fashionable society and the Court, where mistresses and infidelities were not only an accepted part of life, but often flaunted, the King remained steadfastly faithful to his very plain Queen, the German princess Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, with whom by now he had produced ten children. (Ultimately there would be fifteen.) Gossips claimed Farmer George's chief pleasures were a leg of mutton and his plain little wife.

But this was hardly fair. Nor was he the unattractive, dim-witted man critics claimed then and afterward. Tall and rather handsome, with clear blue eyes and a generally cheerful expression, George III had a genuine love of music and played both the violin and piano. (His favorite composer was Handel, but he adored also the music of Bach and in 1764 had taken tremendous delight in hearing the boy Mozart perform on the organ.) He loved architecture and did quite beautiful architectural drawings of his own. With a good eye for art, he had begun early to assemble his own collection, which by now included works by the contemporary Italian painter Canaletto, as well as watercolors and drawings by such old masters as Poussin and Raphael. He avidly collected books, to the point where he had assembled one of the finest libraries in the world. He adored clocks, ship models, took great interest in things practical, took great interest in astronomy, and founded the Royal Academy of Arts.”

(1776, 335 words)

#### Part I

Think of a person you are familiar with (your room at home, a favorite restaurant, your backyard, etc.). For your description, write down a few notes for what you might describe for:

Physical Attributes:

Mannerisms:

Personality Attributes:

**Part II:**

Using the excerpt from McCullough as a guide (try to imitate the feel of his writing, the sentence structure, etc.), write your own description based on the notes you wrote for Part I. Limit your passage to less than 300 words.

**Part III:**

Imitate the style of one great sentence of your choice from the original

Original:

Imitation:

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:

## Description

### Carl Bloch



("The Daughter of Jairus," by Carl Bloch)

#### Part I

Study the painting and take notes on:

Time:

Place:

Action:

Person:

Thing:

**Part II:**

Using your notes, write a description of the painting, or a character in the painting, in such a way as to bring it to life for someone—to make them want to come back and look at the painting two or three times. Limit your work to under 300 words.

**Part III:**

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:

## Description

### John William Waterhouse



("I Am Half-Sick of Shadows," said the Lady of Shalott, by John William Waterhouse)

**Part I**

**Study the painting and take notes on:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Action:**

**Person:**

**Thing:**

**Part II:**

**Using your notes, write a description of the painting, or a character in the painting, in such a way as to bring it to life for someone—to make them want to come back and look at the painting two or three times. Limit your work to under 300 words.**

**Part III:**

**Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation:**

## Description Claude Monet



("Water Lilies," by Claude Monet)

Part I

Study the painting and take notes on:

Time:

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**Place:**

**Action:**

**Person:**

**Thing:**

**Part II:**

Using your notes, write a description of the painting, or a character in the painting, in such a way as to bring it to life for someone—to make them want to come back and look at the painting two or three times. Limit your work to under 300 words.

**Part III:**

Choose your own best sentence, worthy of imitation: