

Narrative Paragraphs



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Organization

Narration is story writing. When you write a narrative paragraph, you write about events in the order that they happen. In other words, you use **time order** to organize your sentences.

As you read the model paragraph, look for words and phrases that tell when something happened.

MODEL

Narrative Paragraph

Earthquake!

¹An unforgettable experience in my life was a magnitude 6.9 earthquake. ²I was at home with my older sister and younger brother. ³Suddenly, our apartment started shaking. ⁴At first, none of us realized what was happening. ⁵Then my sister yelled, “Earthquake! Get under something!” ⁶I half rolled and half crawled across the room to get under the dining table. ⁷My sister also yelled at my little brother to get under his desk. ⁸Meanwhile, my sister was on the kitchen floor holding her arms over her head to protect it from falling dishes. ⁹The earthquake lasted less than a minute, but it seemed like a year to us. ¹⁰At last, the shaking stopped. ¹¹For a minute or two, we were too scared to move. ¹²Then we tried to call our parents at work, but even our cell phone didn’t work. ¹³Next, we checked the apartment for damage. ¹⁴We felt very lucky, for nothing was broken except a few dishes. ¹⁵However, our first earthquake was an experience that none of us will ever forget.

Questions on the Model

1. In which four sentences does the word *earthquake* appear?
2. What words and phrases show when different actions took place? Circle them.

Time Order

In the model **narrative** paragraph, the writer used **time order** to tell what happened first, what happened next, what happened after that, and so on.

Notice the kinds of words and phrases used to show time order. These are called **time order signals** because they signal the order in which events happen.

Time Order Signals

Words	Phrases
Finally,	At last,
First (second, third, etc.),	At 12:00,
Later, <i>x</i>	After a while,
Meanwhile,	After that,
Next,	Before beginning the lesson,
Now	In the morning,
Soon	The next day,

Put a comma after a time order signal that comes before the subject at the beginning of a sentence. (Exception: *Then, soon, and now* are usually not followed by a comma.)

At first, none of us realized what was happening.

For a minute or two, we were too scared to move.

Then we tried to call our parents at work.

PRACTICE 1

Time Order

- Look again at the model on page 24. Add any time order signal words or phrases that you circled to the Time Order Signals chart above.
- Complete the paragraphs with time order signals from the lists provided, and capitalize and punctuate them correctly. Use each word or phrase once. There is more than one possible word or phrase to fill in some of the blanks.

- Use these words and phrases:

first	after dinner
on the night before Thanksgiving	in the morning
about 3:00 in the afternoon	soon
then	before taking the first bite
after that	finally

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving in the United States is a day for families to be together and enjoy a traditional meal. (a) On the night before Thanksgiving, our mother bakes a pumpkin pie, the traditional Thanksgiving dessert. (b) _____ she gets up early to prepare the other traditional dishes.

(continued on next page)

(c) _____ she makes dressing.¹ (d) _____
 _____ she stuffs² the turkey with the dressing and puts the
 turkey into the oven to roast. (e) _____ she
 prepares the rest of the meal. She cooks all day long. (f) _____
 _____ the family sits down at the table. (g) _____
 _____ everyone around the table says one thing that they are thankful
 for. (h) _____ we can begin to eat. We
 stuff ourselves just as full as Mother stuffed the turkey earlier in the day!
 (i) _____ we are all groaning³ because we
 have eaten too much. (j) _____ we collapse
 on the living room sofa and watch football games on TV. No one moves for
 at least two hours.

2. Use these words and phrases:

on the day of the party
 during the party
 before the party
 at the beginning of the party

first
 after that
 then (use twice)

next
 finally
 later

Fifteen Years



A girl's fifteenth birthday is a very special occasion in many Latin American countries and requires a lot of planning. (a) _____ the parents make many preparations. (b) _____ they buy a special dress and order a bouquet of flowers for their daughter. They also plan a large meal for the guests and hire an orchestra. (c) _____ they decorate a big room where the party will be held. (d) _____ there are many special traditions. (e) _____ the father and daughter enter the big salon accompanied by special music. (f) _____ the father makes

¹**dressing:** mixture of bread cubes, onion, celery, butter, chicken broth, and herbs that is cooked inside a turkey. After it is cooked, it is removed from the turkey and eaten as a side dish. It is also called *stuffing*.

²**stuff:** put inside; fill until completely full

³**groaning:** making a long deep sound because you are in pain

a speech, and the daughter gets some presents. (g) _____

_____ everyone drinks champagne. (h) _____

_____ the father and daughter dance a waltz, and the daughter and every boy dance one dance together. (i) _____

all of the guests make a line to congratulate her. (j) _____

_____ all of the boys stand in a group because she will throw the bouquet, and the boy who catches it dances with her. (k) _____

_____ everyone dances to different kinds of music until six o'clock in the morning.

C. The following sets of sentences are not in correct time order. Number the sentences in the correct order.

1. _____ She put the clean dishes away.

_____ 2 She removed the dirty dishes from the table.

_____ She turned on the dishwasher.

_____ She put them in the dishwasher.

_____ She piled them in the sink and rinsed them.

_____ 1 It was Sarah's turn to wash the dishes last night.

_____ Finally, the dishes were clean.

2. _____ He filled it out and left.

_____ He went to the bookshelf, but the book wasn't there.

_____ Tom went to the library to get a book.

_____ He went to the computer catalog.

_____ The librarian told him to fill out a form.

_____ He told the librarian he wanted to reserve that book.

_____ He wrote down the title and call number⁴ of the book.

(continued on next page)

⁴**call number:** number written on the outside of a book; the book's "address" on the library shelves

3. _____ He gave us a room with an ocean view.
 _____ The airline had oversold¹ economy class seats, so we got to sit in first class.
 _____ Our good fortune continued at the hotel.
 _____ We can't wait to visit Florida again.
 _____ The hotel manager also gave us coupons for lots of free things.
 _____ The hotel manager apologized for not having our room ready when we arrived.
 _____ Our vacation in Florida last month was almost perfect.
 _____ The weather was warm and sunny, so we went to the beach every day.
 _____ Our good fortune began at the airport.

Try It Out!

Write the sentences from the preceding exercise as paragraphs. Try to make your paragraphs flow smoothly by using these two techniques: (1) Add time order signals at the beginning of some of the sentences. (2) Combine some of the sentences to form simple sentences with one subject and two verbs.

Example

It was Sarah's turn to wash the dishes last night. First, she removed the dirty dishes from the table. Next, she piled them in the sink and rinsed them. After that, she put them in the dishwasher and turned it on. Finally, the dishes were clean.

¹**oversold:** sold more seats than were available

Sentence Structure

The model for this section is a folktale. A folktale is a traditional story that has been passed down orally from one generation to the next until someone finally writes it down. Every culture is rich in folktales. This one is from Japan.

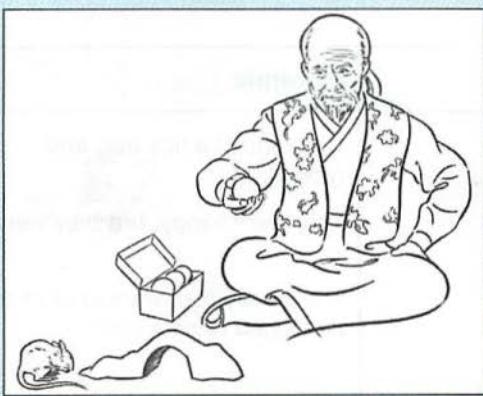
MODEL

Compound Sentences

Omusubi Kororin (The Tumbling Rice Balls)

A Folktale from Japan

¹Once upon a time, an old couple lived in the countryside. ²They were happy, but they were poor. ³One day, the old man went to work in the forest and took his usual lunch of three rice balls. ⁴During lunch, he dropped a rice



ball, and it rolled into a hole in the ground. ⁵He heard happy singing coming from the hole, so he dropped the other two rice balls into it. ⁶Inside the hole, some mice were having a party. ⁷They thanked him for the rice balls and invited him to join them. ⁸After a while, the mice told him to choose a box as a reward for his

generosity.² ⁹He could choose a big box, or he could choose a small one.

¹⁰He thought about taking a big box, but he finally chose a small one. ¹¹Back at home, he and his wife discovered that the box was full of gold coins.

¹²A greedy³ neighbor heard about their good fortune and quickly made plans to visit the same hole. ¹³At the hole, he pushed several rice balls into it, and sure enough,⁴ the mice invited him in. ¹⁴The greedy man wanted all of the mice's gold, so he pretended to be a cat. ¹⁵He started meowing loudly, and the frightened mice ran away. ¹⁶The gold disappeared with the mice, so the greedy man got nothing, not even a rice ball.

Questions on the Model

1. What kind of order does this folktale use?
2. Circle the time order signals and add any new ones to the Time Order Signals chart on page 25.

²generosity: willingness to give money, time, help, and so on

³greedy: always wanting more money, possessions, power, and so on

⁴sure enough: informal expression that means something happens just as expected

Compound Sentences with *and*, *but*, *so*, and *or*

In Chapter 1, you learned about simple sentences. A simple sentence has one subject-verb combination. Another kind of sentence is a compound sentence. A compound sentence has two or more subject-verb combinations.

A **compound sentence** is composed of at least two simple sentences joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction. A compound sentence has this “formula”:

The gold disappeared with the mice, COORD.
CONJ.
so the greedy man got nothing.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *and*, *but*, *so*, *or*, *for*, *nor*, and *yet*. In this chapter, you will study the first four.¹

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating Conjunction	Example
<i>And</i> joins sentences that are alike.	He dropped a rice ball, and it rolled into a hole in the ground.
<i>But</i> joins sentences that are opposite or show contrast.	They were happy, but they were poor.
<i>So</i> joins sentences when the second sentence expresses the result of something described in the first sentence.	The greedy man wanted all of the mice's gold, so he pretended to be a cat.
<i>Or</i> joins sentences that give choices or alternatives.	He could choose a big box, or he could choose a small one.

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in compound sentences only. Do not use a comma to join two words or two phrases in a simple sentence.

COMPOUND SENTENCES (COMMA)

Yesterday we went shopping, **but** we didn't buy anything.
The stores were crowded, **and** they were noisy.
We ate lunch, **and** then we went home.

SIMPLE SENTENCES (NO COMMA)

Yesterday we went shopping **but** didn't buy anything.
The stores were crowded **and** noisy.
We ate lunch **and** then went home.

PRACTICE 2

Compound Sentences with *and*, *but*, *so*, and *or*

- Draw a box around each coordinating conjunction in the story “Omusubi Kororin” on page 29. Explain why some of them have commas, but others don’t.
- Decide which of the following sentences are compound sentences and which are simple sentences. Write *CS* or *SS* on the line at the left. Then add commas to the compound sentences.

¹Coordinating conjunctions are sometimes called *fan boys* because their first letters spell those words: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

Monsieur Seguin's Goat
A Folktale from France

SS 1. A long time ago, high in the Alps, an old man lived with his goat, Blanchette.

_____ 2. She was a wonderful white goat and was very kind to her master, Monsieur Seguin.

_____ 3. They had lived together for many years.

_____ 4. Blanchette was always fastened to a tree.

_____ 5. She was often sad and sometimes she didn't eat her food.

_____ 6. Every day, she looked at the big mountains and dreamed of being free to explore them.

_____ 7. One day, she asked her master for more freedom.

_____ 8. "You can tie me with a longer rope or you can build a special enclosure for me," said Blanchette.

_____ 9. At first, he tied her with a longer rope but Blanchette was still sad.

_____ 10. A few days later, he built a special enclosure.

_____ 11. For a while, Blanchette was very happy about this decision but soon the enclosure seemed very small in front of the big mountains.

_____ 12. One summer morning, Blanchette decided to leave for the mountains so she jumped out of the enclosure and ran away.

_____ 13. "I am free," she said.

_____ 14. She ate many varieties of plants and enjoyed meeting new friends.

_____ 15. All day, she ran in the Alps.

_____ 16. Finally, the sun set behind the hills.

C. For each set of sentences, make a compound sentence or a simple sentence with two verbs. Use the coordinating conjunction *and*, *but*, *or*, or *so* to join the sentences. Punctuate carefully. There may be more than one way to combine some of the sentences.

1. It became very dark. Blanchette was suddenly afraid.

It became very dark, and Blanchette was suddenly afraid.

2. She heard a noise. She decided to go back to her enclosure.

3. She walked for a long time. She couldn't find the road.

(continued on next page)

4. Finally, she became very tired. She tried to rest. Her fear prevented her from sleeping. (Combine all three sentences.)

5. Suddenly, a wolf appeared. The wolf looked at her hungrily.

6. She shouted for help. No one heard her.

7. The wolf ate Blanchette. The poor old man never saw his little goat again.

8. Blanchette wanted to be free. Freedom can be dangerous when we disobey.

D. On a separate piece of paper, write compound sentences using the coordinating conjunctions you have learned. Follow the directions given.

1. Write a sentence that tells one thing you like to do and one thing you don't like to do. (Use *but*.)

Example: I like to swim in the ocean, but I don't like to swim in swimming pools.

2. Write a sentence that tells two things you do every morning after you get up. (Use *and*.)

3. Write a sentence that tells two things you might do during your next vacation. (Use *or*.)

4. Write a sentence that tells the results of each phrase. Begin each sentence with *I am/was. . .* (Use *so* in all three sentences.)

a. being born in (your country)

Example: I was born in Russia, so I speak Russian.

b. being the oldest/youngest/middle/only child in your family

c. being a lazy/hard-working student

5. Write a sentence that tells two different careers you might have in the future. (Use *or*.)

Try It Out!

Choose one of the following and write a paragraph. In your paragraph, focus on writing compound sentences. Try to use the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *so*, and *or* at least one time each.

- Retell a short folktale from your culture.
- Retell a children's story that you know.
- Retell the plot of a movie that you have seen recently.