Martin 8th Lang. Arts

*ISat strategies Practice #1: Narrative introduction & Conclusions*

Introduction strategies—

1. The question

Have you ever seen something completely unexplainable, something so strange that if you told a friend, they’d think you were nuts? I witnessed something so odd last summer that my friends still don’t believe me.

NOTES: Make it a question your reader will probably say yes to.

Make it mysterious

2. The Upside-Down Triangle

Life, unfortunately, is full of embarrassments, ranging from the minor (you accidently burped in class) to the major ones (you walked around all day with a “dork” sign on your back). One traumatically embarrassing moment occurred for me last month during my first real date. What began with such promise ended in utter humiliation.

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3. The Quote

“Honesty is the best policy,” Abraham Lincoln once famously declared. I wish old Honest Abe would have been around to guide me two years ago when I decided to lie to my parents.

NOTES: Choose a common quote or maybe a family saying—be sure to connect it to your story

4. The Foreshadow (“little did I know…”)

Ahhhh, all was right. The two little boys I was babysitting were in bed, fast asleep. The dishes from dinner were washed and put away. I had folded the laundry Mrs. Holden had left for me. I was just about to settle down to watch a little TV. Little did I know, the most frightening evening of my life was about to begin.

NOTES: Set a situation up and then throw in “little did I know”—don’t give away story

5. The sensory Fade-in

The crowd cheered as the announcer called off the starting line-ups for the basketball game. The smell of popcorn filled the gym. The stands were packed with spectators sporting their purple Titan shirts. You could feel the excitement in the air! I was literally shaking with nervousness and anticipation. Our sectional game versus Fieldcrest was about to begin.

NOTES: use the five senses! (don’t have to hit them all)—set the scene—last sentence gives location

6. The Dialogue start

“Fluuuffy?, Fluuuuffy?” my mom called anxiously around the house one morning over winter break. “Josh, I haven’t seen Fluffy today. Have you seen her anywhere?” she questioned me. “I’ve looked everywhere.” I hadn’t seen Fluffy and I didn’t care where that psycho cat was. It turns out, Fluffy was experiencing the adventure of a lifetime, or should I say “lifetimes.” They say cat’s have nine lives. It think Fluffy used all hers up that December day.

NOTES:Add enough details so that reader understands what’s going on—use more than one line of dialogue

7. The Action start

WHIZZ!!! SHLURRR!! POP! BANG!!! Blasts everywhere! I ran and dove behind our trash cans to avoid the onslaught of explosions. Reds, greens, and golds buzzed and flared over the driveway. No, our house was not being bombed by a battalion of fighter jets. It was just crazy Uncle Larry, and the dangerous illegal fireworks he brought to our home last Fourth of July. Pay close attention, reader. Fireworks are NOT toys.

NOTES: Onomatopoeia is good. Few random description—last sentence tells situation

8. The 5?’s Start (WhO, What, When, Where, Why)

The bottom of ninth inning was about to begin at Wrigley Field on a hot, sunny July afternoon. The Cubs were down 5-3, and Carlos Marmol had just struck out Albert Pujols for the final Cardinals’ out. Now, my favorite team, my beloved Cubbies, was up to bat. I was about to witness the single most incredible thing I have ever seen with my two eyes.

NOTES:Answer all five questions, but answer “why” last.

9. The “Imagine” Start

Imagine awakening suddenly in the dead of night to the sound of ferocious yowling and screeching. It sounds like wild jungle cats are having a fight-to-the-death, all-out brawl next to your bed. Is this a dream? Am I dreaming about tigers in Africa? Well, it was no dream. And, fortunately, they were no tigers. It was just the “cuddly” family cat, Fluffy, protecting me from an invader.

NOTES: start with “imagine”; put your reader in your situation

10. The emotional Start

I have never been so nervous in my life! My face was as red as a fire truck. Sweat was beading on my forehead (I swear it must have been one hundred degrees in that gym). My legs were shaking badly and I couldn’t stop them. My mouth was suddenly desert-dry as I opened it to speak. I stood in front of the entire student body attempting to convince them to elect me (who was obviously a confident leader) as student council president.

NOTES: describe the emotion in detail—at least three sentences min./use five senses.

11. The startling statement

I am a murderer. Granted, it was an accident and I was only seven, but yeah, I’m a killer. What’s worse is that I lied about it and never got punished. “How could this be?” you may be wondering in fear. You are about to bear witness to the gruesome details of the death of….Tiny the Gerbil.

NOTES:Keep the mystery going for a few sentences. Explain startling statement at end of paragraph

12. The list

One cup of prune juice, a teaspoon of vinegar, a few sprays of my sister’s gross perfume, a dollop of mustard, a couple squirts of Sweet Baby Ray’s barbecue sauce, and finally, a pinch of chili pepper—what do you have? It’s the most disgusting thing you’ve ever smelled, or as my friend and I liked to call it, Stink Potion #9. Why would anyone concoct such a sick creation? Revenge.

NOTES:List at least 3 random things—but reveal what they have in common by the end.

Intro no-no’s!!!

1. “I’m going to tell you…”

2. “Here’s What happened…”

3. “My Name is…”

4. “My story is about…”

5. Don’t give it all away

Writing Activity:

Below, write two possible introductions for your “Happened in My ‘Hood” essay. For each introduction, use one of the recommended strategies above.

Introduction #1

Strategy used:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Introduction #2

Strategy used:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Conclusion Strategies--

1. What you learned

Clearly, complaining about my “lame” birthday to my mother was an awful thing to do, especially considering all the work and planning she put into it. I can hardly forgive myself to this day for making her cry. On my thirteenth birthday, I learned that I better slow down to appreciate the people who love me and do kind things for me. It’s a lesson I hope I never forget.

NOTES:tell what you learned/ “a lesson I hope I never forget”

2. What you felt

I don’t think I will ever forget the sickening, frightening feeling I felt that night when my life flashed before my eyes. It was a sheer terror that I could feel in my gut. And to think that if that oncoming semi driver had waited a split second to swerve back into his lane…it gives me chills. It’s a panic I hope I never experience again.

NOTES: take a few sentences to describe what you felt. Use five senses.

3. Address intro question

So to answer my beginning question of “What do an 82-year-old nursing home resident and a 15-year-old death metal fan have in common?” it turns out, more than you would think. Hank and I shared a love for pranks, infomercials, and attractive ladies. I truly enjoyed hanging out with that old dude. When he passed away, I felt I’d lost a good friend.

NOTES: You can actually restate the exact question from your intro

4. Prediction

I would venture to guess that Fluffy will steer clear of the washing machine in the future. One ride in the “Maytag of mayhem” ought to be enough for our adventurous cat. One the other hand, I don’t recall Fluffy’s coat ever smelling so Downy fresh. Maybe she should take a spin in the washer more often.

NOTES: “in the future” statement is 1st sentence “from now on”

5. “these days” ending

Nowadays, I am much more careful about checking for peanut oil at restaurants. I don’t want to ever repeat what I experienced at Ching Woo’s Hot Wok Express. And, I keep my epi-pen at my side at all times. No peanut is ever going to get the best of me.

NOTES: “nowadays”, “these days,” “I’m older now, but” “Since then”

6. Sensory fade-out

The final buzzer sounded, the game ended, our team shook hands with our victorious opponents, and the crowd filed out of the gym. Silently, and with our shoulders slumped, my teammates and I changed out of our uniforms and trudged to the bus in defeat. It was a quiet bus ride home that evening. As I looked out the window at the icy stars hanging in the black frosty sky, that final shot replayed over and over in my head. “What if?” I kept thinking.

NOTES: Use five senses. A plethora of short sentence to close scene.

7. The Right side-up Triangle

Yes, blowing thick yellow snot all over my first date was mortifying. But look at the bright side, I didn’t die like I first thought I would and I didn’t even pass my cold on to Reggie. I guess everyone has their embarrassing moments. When they come, you just have to grin and bear it. And remember, at least you didn’t sneeze all over your first date.

NOTES:

8. The quote

Whoever said “revenge is sweet” had it completely wrong, at least when it involves Stink Potion #9. That day in the park, revenge was an awful stench. Ryan and I had gotten back at Brad for spreading the nasty rumor about my sister, and justice, in all its pungent glory, was served.

NOTES:

9. The call-to-Action

I can assure you, helium balloons and mice are not a wise combination. It may seem like a fun idea to set rodents soaring, but the police and general public will think otherwise. Don’t make the mistake I did. If you ever for some reason see a trapped mouse near a billowy bouquet of helium balloons, just walk away.

NOTES: End by telling the reader to do something--directly

Conclusion no-no’s!!!

1. restate intro

2. “And that was the time i…”

3. “in conclusion,” “All in all,” “IN the end,”…

4. “I hope you enjoyed my paper…”

5. “The end”

6. Heavy-handed sermonizing

Writing Activity:

Below, write two possible conclusions for your “Happened in My ‘Hood” essay. For each conclusion, use one of the recommended strategies above.

Conclusion #1

Strategy used:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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conclusion #2

Strategy used:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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