

The Elements of Personal Narrative

Characters: The characters are the people (and sometimes animals) in the story. The central character in personal narratives is the author.

Setting: The setting is the time and place of the story. When a character walks from one part of the neighborhood to the other, the scene changes but the setting stays the same.

Plot: The plot is the sequence of events in the story. Writers deliberately order and highlight plot, which may not represent the actual chronological sequence of events. For example, writers may use flashbacks to produce tension, suspense, conflict and resolution.

Movement through time: The passage of time is always evident in the plot and often in the character(s) and the setting.

Change: In a story a story there must be change. Either the characters, the setting, or the events change. Often characters learn something or change as a result of the situation or a conflict and resolution, but not always.

Significance: Personal narratives are written about something important to the writer.