WRITING AN EFFECTIVE NARRATIVE

1. Choose an incident that involves conflict: a struggle with a person, with nature, with society, or even with yourself. Introduce the CONFLICT early.
2. Use DIALOGUE, but be selective, choosing only what is necessary to develop the story. Make sure it sounds real. Here’s where you can use slang and colloquialisms.
3. Use DESCRIPTION to help tell the story and to help create a more real situation (5 senses). Make sure the descriptive details contribute to the plot.
4. PARAGRAPH so that your audience will be able to read it easily. Avoid long paragraphs with too much detail. When you use dialogue, include a new paragraph for each new speaker.
5. Your WORD CHOICE should be original and create vivid images.
6. Remove NON-ESSENTIAL DETAILS.
7. EMOTION – describe the characters’ feelings
8. ACTION – not necessarily only physical, but emotional or intellectual as well.
9. SUSPENSE – plant seeds that hint at conflicts, problems or mysteries.
10. Be sure your narrative has a POINT OR PURPOSE, but DO NOT MORALIZE.

PRE-WRITING

1. List the SETTING: time and place. Describe it.
2. CHARACTERS: Name and describe all of them, physically and personality-wise.
3. EVENT: List the sequence of events.
4. POINT: Make sure you have one.
5. LEAD: Try out a few before you begin your story.

LEAD

1. Read the leads to a few short stories or the first sentences in the chapters of the novel you are currently reading. Notice what the writer does to get your attention.
2. Use specific details that engage the senses.
3. Include active verbs and movement.
4. Create some sort of mystery that causes the reader to ask questions such as who, what, when, why or where.