

Grade 9-10 Narrative Writing Standard W.9-10.3

Grade 9-10 Narrative

W.9.3-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students wrote personal essays inspired by thematic discussions from book groups. During this unit, students discussed significant events in their stories by looking at sections of the text and reflecting on their meaning. They then wrote short, personal narratives on the same themes. After reading and color-coding multiple college application essays, students expanded their narratives into full personal essays. The final prompt was written independently. Their Focusing Question was *“Describe a time when you felt you learned something significant. Describe the learning and its importance to you.”*

This writing piece assesses students’ ability to construct a personal narrative using precise language and to reflect on the significance of an experience.

Focus of the Writing Task

Describe a time when you felt you learned something significant. Describe the learning and its importance to you.

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is the writing embedded in curriculum/content?



Class

- heterogeneous 9th grade English class



Curriculum unit

- part of a unit focused on personal essays
- students read one of three books and participated in book groups and book discussions that led to a jumping off point for personal narrative prompts
- students read, annotated, and color-coded multiple college application essay models (available on college websites)



Standards

- Reading: RI and RL9-10.1, RI and RL9-10.2, RI and RL 9-10.10
- Writing: W.9-10.3 and W.9-10.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?



Text

- varied books chosen for showing specific themes, read and discussed in reading groups as a bridge to personal reflection



Reading, re-reading, note-taking, and seminars

- students read independently and took notes on quotes and events that pertained to central questions
- students then applied central questions to their own lives
- guided seminars involved rereading key passages, identifying and discussing the narrative elements of the selection, and reflecting on the significance of the stories in relation to our central questions

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?



Craft lessons

- students had already read and analyzed narrative elements in stories in previous units
- students had also identified, analyzed, and used figurative language in a poetry unit
- during this unit, students read multiple models of personal essays, identifying narrative elements, personal reflection, and universal ideas as they did so



Writing approaches

- students discussed ideas and concrete questions in their books and then discussed examples of these in their own lives
- after oral processing, students wrote several mini-narratives addressing the same questions and then selected the one they liked best
- students then reworked their favorite narratives to include personal reflection and a universal idea
- students received feedback on their first essay and revised their pieces

- the essay appearing here was the second essay of the unit. For this essay, students discussed the topic in the context of their books, processing how it showed up in their lives, and then wrote the essay independently after reviewing one of our models.

What was the timeframe?

Ten eighty-five minute blocks with considerable independent reading and note-taking required outside of class

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Proficient

Violin lessons

In first grade, towards the middle of the year, I started learning how to play the violin. Once a week, after school, I would walk up the long sandy driveway and up the slippery, rickety, wooden steps to the top floor of the red brick apartment my teacher lived in. At first, I didn't like the lessons very much, because I didn't know that practicing was part of the learning experience, and I was lazy. But after a while, I came to enjoy the lessons, and came to respect my teacher.

I remember a particular class, a couple years into my lessons, that I had to prepare for during the previous week. My teacher had taught me a small piece, just a simple song, really, and had asked that I play the whole thing for her at my next lesson. That whole week I practiced every day, and tried my best to work out the squeaky notes and tricky rhythms of the song. I was feeling very confident about it, and was ready to play the whole thing at my next class.

I eagerly ran up the driveway, and quickly, but cautiously scampered up the steps, and soon found myself in the music room of the apartment. I took out my little violin and, trying my absolute best to not make any mistakes, played the song for my teacher.

In my opinion, it went well; I knew it as soon as I lifted my bow from the string. But what my teacher said next surprised me. "Why did you play so quietly?," she asked. I assured her that that wasn't my intention, and that in order for the notes to be perfect, measures had to be taken. My teacher then did something even more unexpected. She picked up her own violin and began to play the same piece, with flaws that even I could spot, however she played it so comfortably and confidently that I enjoyed hearing it, despite the errors. She then looked at me over her glasses and said "It's better to play strong and wrong than to execute the piece weakly but perfectly."

To be told that you were weak may have offended other young children, but I was so impressed with that advice that I didn't take offence. I always remembered that lesson, and now, every time I play my violin, I think about what my teacher told me. I play as well as I can, but never with a hint of shyness or cautiousness. And I use that piece of advice in other situations every day. Whether it is at school, when I'm not sure I have the answer but I raise my hand anyway, or during a sports practice, where I try a new throw even if I'm not sure if it will work

out, I always feign confidence and hope that that's what others will see. In almost every situation, taking a risk and failing is better than quietly doing an almost perfect job. There is always an opportunity to take risks in life. And nobody is perfect. People fail sometimes. But everyone is capable of truly magnificent things, and having the courage to take that chance of failing – and yet still doing the absolute best you can do with pride – that can make all the difference in the world.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Approaching

What You Have

When my grandmother's sister died, my grandmother said to me "You don't know what you have until it's gone." For years I always wondered what this quote really meant. Although it sounded self explanatory I still couldn't figure out the message it was trying to get across. In my opinion, these words didn't have a real or important meaning. I couldn't decide if the quote related to the time I lost my childhood doll I didn't play with anymore and I got sad or the time my siblings went to boarding school and I realized how much they really made me happy.

Having matured a little bit I have come to an understanding that these words could be applied to both situations. I learnt that I don't appreciate what I have until they are no longer around me. I moved to the US very happy because I was getting away from my school and annoying friends but after only a week I cried. I didn't cry because I missed them, I cried because they weren't there for me to tell them they're annoying. I was used to my friends running around, teasing each other, walking to school and back home together and many other things I do with my friends in _____ high school here but it will never feel the same. My friends in Ghana were the people I grew up with, my neighbours and my classmates. I could never share a bond with another group of people like I did with them.

After two year of staying in the United States, I have come to the conclusion that I knew what I had, I just never thought I would lose it. I might still not understand this quote entirely but I believe my grandmother was just trying to tell me to enjoy the little things and people in life because someday I will realize they were the big things.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Beginning

Basketball

I've been participating in sports for years, since elementary school. Every year, we play bowling, snowshoeing, and bocce ball. I enjoy playing these sports. This year, in addition to those sports, is the second year we've played basketball. I wasn't planning on participating in that. Unlike the other sports, basketball is fast-thinking, which I'm not so good at. Last year, I played it, but I recall not enjoying it.

This year, I was hesitant to join the basketball team, remembering how I wanted out last year. However, _____ encouraged me to try it out, to at least come to the practices. I decided that was a good compromise, and proceed to participate in the basketball practices, still quite uncertain about continuing.

After one of the practices, I expressed my uncertainty about continuing to _____. He encouraged me to continue, but he said meant no pressure. Then he pulled out his phone to show me something on it. He showed me the lock screen. The first thing I noticed was a missed call notification from an unrecognized number. But that wasn't what he was trying to show me. What he was trying to show me the wallpaper, which had the phrase "the more you practice, the better you get." Some of the words were cut off by the ends of the screen. Anyway, I totally agreed with that message, but as I went home that day, my questions were: did I really enjoy basketball, and was it worth participating in an optional activity that I didn't really enjoy?

Pretty soon, we had our first basketball game. I was still uncertain about playing. I was really considering sitting out and watching. But everyone encouraged me to play, and so I ended up putting on a uniform and playing with the team. As it turned out, I'm pretty good at basketball, as the coaches and team members told me. They were right: I wasn't as bad at it as I remembered. I was good at dribbling the ball, passing it, and getting it closer to the basket. However, my weakness was playing defence. It was tricky to stay with the person I was guarding and block the ball. But, I could get better at that by practicing it more.

After the game, I was glad I'd played. It felt pretty good to be on the team. People were telling us it had been a good game. Apparently I was good at basketball, and people wanted me on the team, so I decided to continue participating for the rest of the season, even though it

wasn't my favorite sport. What I've learned is that you should give activities a good long chance before you decide not to do them. Be open to the options.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Exceeds

Finding Me

As the trees' leaves began to change color and fall to slightly sun scorched grass, I started to prepare for back to school season. It was different this year, I wasn't going to be returning to my old private middle school like last year. For my ninth grade year I had decided to attend the local public school. It wasn't huge or anything, around 350 students all together, but that was way bigger than anything I had ever experienced, having gone to an out in the country 100 student elementary and middle school my whole life, in the woods surrounded by green rolling hills and lush forest. I knew a couple people who were going to transfer with me, one was my best friend at the time however, I still couldn't help stressing about the year to come. I had never switched schools before and at my old school I knew every teacher and student, all the ins and outs. So with a stomach full of nerves and an almost empty backpack with pencils and a squashed sandwich, I stepped inside the stuffy warm building for my first day.

As the first few weeks flew by, I started to adjust to new teachers and classes. I quickly found that I knew just as much as the students who had came from the public middle school, and that having a two story school building wasn't too hard to approach. The first month passed with ease, and I no longer felt the urge to throw up while in the hallways alone. I liked my teachers, I didn't mind the homework, and I enjoyed walking home through afternoon sunlight. It wasn't until fall got a little colder and the first snowflakes started to fall on the now empty trees that I realized something was wrong. My old friends started to find people they enjoyed and started hanging out with new friends. They seemed happy. I wanted that too, and it wasn't like I didn't know how to be. I tried really hard to find people to be friends with. I joined clubs and started conversations before classes. I smiled to that one boy in my English class when I saw him at lunch and complimented the girl who sat across from me in science. No one really seemed too interested, and I found out that there was no one I really connected with in my grade. It was a lonely feeling really, lost in this space where you would expect to find someone. This thought, that there was no one who liked me or that I liked in the whole 9th grade started to grow on me. The girls who I grew up with started experiencing new things without me. My old best friend

found a new one. Every day I looked around at my classmates feeling utterly unattached. No one liked me for no reason it seemed.

I found myself talking differently and lying about the things I liked so people would like me. I was struggling to figure out what people wanted from me as I fell into a routine of discomfort. What was wrong with me that I couldn't make friends? Those thoughts filled my mind as I started to become someone I didn't know. The other girls acted like they didn't understand the material in school so I acted that way too. I knew how to do the Pythagorean theorem homework. I knew how to make an atom model. But that wasn't the person who people wanted, so I slowly stopped being her. I still wasn't happy for some unimaginable, unexplainable reason. I thought the moment I had someone to eat with, or sit with, or hang out with after school, my problems would be solved and my life would transform into just what I always wanted. One weekend, as I sat on the checkered chair in my living room, petting my long haired brown and gray cat who was laid comfortably purring in my lap, I thought about who I was, and what I really deep down wanted. All I could think of was that it wasn't this; it was exhausting and draining. I would rather have no friends than no me. At the end of the day you are the only one that matters, because you aren't anyone at all if you aren't yourself.

That spring, I found a group of friends who I love very dearly. On top of that, I found a girl who understood me more than anyone else, who I loved spending time with, who I could be myself with all the time, and it was me. I know it sounds cliché, in fact I think I read it on a sign in the bathroom of a Chinese restaurant in downtown Manhattan and rolled my eyes, but it took me a while to realize that I wouldn't have good friends unless they liked me for who I actually was. It was never something I had to figure out before, and it took rough months of not knowing who to be, to find a genuine life I enjoyed. More than anything this is something I never knew I was missing, but I encourage every person out there to be pushed into a tangle of unfamiliar faces and with the deep want to be accepted makes you struggle through uncertainty to find something certain.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Proficient

Violin lessons

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Engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem or situation, establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator

I remember a particular class, a couple years into my lessons, that I had to prepare for during the previous week. My teacher had taught me a small piece, just a simple song, really, and had asked that I play the whole thing for her at my next lesson. That whole week I practiced every day, and tried my best to work out the squeaky notes and tricky rhythms of the song. I was feeling very confident about it, and was ready to play the whole thing at my next class.

Uses pacing to develop experiences and sequences events effectively: the writer selects a moment and gives background on the moment without confusing the story's flow.

I eagerly ran up the driveway, and quickly, but cautiously scampered up the steps, and soon found myself in the music room of the apartment. I took out my little violin and, trying my absolute best to not make any mistakes, played the song for my teacher.

Develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient details, quotations and examples

In my opinion, it went well; I knew it as soon as I lifted my bow from the string. But what my teacher said next surprised me. "Why did you play so quietly?," she asked. I assured her that that wasn't my intention, and that in order for the notes to be perfect, measures had to be taken. My teacher then did something even more unexpected. She picked up her own violin and began to play the same piece, with flaws that even I could spot, however she played it so comfortably and confidently that I enjoyed hearing it, despite the errors. She then looked at me over her

Uses dialogue, pacing, reflection, and description to develop events

Uses precise words and telling details to convey a vivid picture of events or characters

glasses and said “It’s better to play strong and wrong than to execute the piece weakly but perfectly.”

To be told that you were weak may have offended other young children, but I was so impressed with that advice that I didn’t take offence. I always remembered that lesson, and now, every time I play my violin, I think about what my teacher told me. I play as well as I can, but never with a hint of shyness or cautiousness. And I use that piece of advice in other situations every day. Whether it is at school, when I’m not sure I have the answer but I raise my hand anyway, or during a sports practice, where I try a new throw even if I’m not sure if it will work out, I always feign confidence and hope that that’s what others will see. In almost every situation, taking a risk and failing is better than quietly doing an almost perfect job. There is always an opportunity to take risks in life. And nobody is perfect. People fail sometimes. But everyone is capable of truly magnificent things, and having the courage to take that chance of failing - and yet still doing the absolute best you can do with pride - that can make all the difference in the world.

Uses a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole: after describing the initial lessons and the pivotal learning experience, the writer smoothly transitions to talking about the present.

The writer includes thoughtful personal **reflection** that builds on the narrative.

Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced: the writer’s conclusion follows logically from the anecdote.

Final Thoughts **(Gr 9 Narrative: Proficient)**

Overall, this piece is effective because it lays out a simple, but powerful, anecdote by emphasizing the most important moments, details, and dialogue in the story. Throughout the piece, reflection and content are closely tied. The pacing of the plot provides us with context and background so that we can understand the central moment of the story. The smooth progression in the sequencing of the story leads us to the universal idea articulated at the end.

A Word about Language and Conventions **(Gr 9 Narrative: Proficient)**

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Approaching

What You Have

When my grandmother's sister died, my grandmother said to me "You don't know what you have until it's gone." For years I always wondered what this quote really meant. Although it sounded self explanatory I still couldn't figure out the message it was trying to get across. In my opinion, these words didn't have a real or important meaning. I couldn't decide if the quote related to the time I lost my childhood doll I didn't play with anymore and I got sad or the time my siblings went to boarding school and I realized how much they really made me happy.

Having matured a little bit I have come to an understanding that these words could be applied to both situations. I learnt that I don't appreciate what I have until they are no longer around me. I moved to the US very happy because I was getting away from my school and annoying friends but after only a week I cried. I didn't cry because I missed them, I cried because they weren't there for me to tell them they're annoying. I was used to my friends running around, teasing each other, walking to school and back home together and many other things I do with my friends in _____ high school here but it will never feel the same. My friends in Ghana were the people I grew up with, my neighbours and my classmates. I could never share a bond with another group of people like I did with them.

After two year of staying in the United States, I have come to the conclusion that I knew what I had, I just never thought I would lose it. I might still not understand this quote entirely but I believe my grandmother was just trying to tell me to enjoy the little things and people in life because someday I will realize they were the big things.

Engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem or situation, establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator

Uses reflection and well-chosen description to develop the problem: the writer sets up the conflict with specific images.

While the writer uses some **details** and **pacing**, she doesn't include a **plotline to develop her experiences**. Her **description** helps build meaning, but describing a specific event or moment would anchor her reflection.

This piece lacks a **precise selection of words, phrases, details and sensory language to convey a picture** that furthers the **plot of the narrative**. While the writer contrasts her experiences in Ghana and the US with general details, she needs to flesh out the story in more specifics to make it come alive.

Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced: this conclusion would be even stronger if it were foreshadowed in a more concrete narrative.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 9 Narrative: Approaching)

Overall, this piece shows solid reflection on an experience. The premise of the piece is clearly laid out in the beginning with ample context and detail. The writer makes the conflict clear through specific examples. Over the course of the piece, the reflection is thoughtful. However, the piece does not lay out a specific, elaborated narrative event with a plotline to illustrate her conflict. Instead the writer only provides us with a few images. As a result, the piece cannot be proficient.

Next steps in moving towards grade-level proficiency for this writer would be to construct a more concrete narrative with a plot to illustrate the loss of her friends in Ghana. Within this narrative, she needs to include the most significant action, details, and dialogue. She needs to attend to the pacing of the events so that she can lead us smoothly to her personal reflection and universal idea at the end.

A Word about Language and Conventions
(Gr 9 Narrative: Approaching)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some tense changes throughout the text, comma errors, number errors, and typos, the writer shows *an emerging control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Beginning

Basketball

I've been participating in sports for years, since elementary school. Every year, we play bowling, snowshoeing, and bocce ball. I enjoy playing these sports. This year, in addition to those sports, is the second year we've played basketball. I wasn't planning on participating in that. Unlike the other sports, basketball is fast-thinking, which I'm not so good at. Last year, I played it, but I recall not enjoying it.

The writer tries to **orient the reader by setting out a problem or situation, establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator.**

This year, I was hesitant to join the basketball team, remembering how I wanted out last year. However, _____ encouraged me to try it out, to at least come to the practices. I decided that was a good compromise, and proceed to participate in the basketball practices, still quite uncertain about continuing.

Uses some **reflection** to **develop the problem**

After one of the practices, I expressed my uncertainty about continuing to _____. He encouraged me to continue, but he said meant no pressure. Then he pulled out his phone to show me something on it. He showed me the lock screen. The first thing I noticed was a missed call notification from an unrecognized number. But that wasn't what he was trying to show me. What he was trying to show me the wallpaper, which had the phrase "the more you practice, the better you get." Some of the words were cut off by the ends of the screen. Anyway, I totally agreed with that message, but as I went home that day, my questions were: did I really enjoy basketball, and was it worth participating in an optional activity that I didn't really enjoy?

Some **details** selected do not further the plotline, and so distract from the focus of the piece. In addition, the **pacing** in this section detracts from the focus as well.

Pretty soon, we had our first basketball game. I was still uncertain about playing. I was really considering sitting out and watching. But everyone encouraged me to play, and so I ended up putting on a uniform and playing with the team. As it turned out, I'm pretty good at basketball, as the coaches and team members told me. They were right: I wasn't as

The writer employs **pacing** and **reflection** to emphasize his point.

bad at it as I remembered. I was good at dribbling the ball, passing it, and getting it closer to the basket. However, my weakness was playing defence. It was tricky to stay with the person I was guarding and block the ball. But, I could get better at that by practicing it more.

After the game, I was glad I'd played. It felt pretty good to be on the team. People were telling us it had been a good game. Apparently I was good at basketball, and people wanted me on the team, so I decided to continue participating for the rest of the season, even though it wasn't my favorite sport. What I've learned is that you should give activities a good long chance before you decide not to do them. Be open to the options.

The writer tries to **provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.** However, the reflections are general.

Final Thoughts (Gr 9 Narrative: Beginning)

This writer described a concrete experience and reflected upon it. Although he outlined a problem and his response, his narrative required more narrative techniques to energize the story. He minimized focus on his central point with the addition of superfluous details, which also threw off his pacing. While he spelled out the elements of the story, he could have used more vivid language, dialogue, and description to develop the characters and experiences. In the end, his conclusion did follow from the story; further, it stated a general truism rather than a hard-won personal revelation.

Next steps in moving toward grade level proficiency for this writer would be to flesh out the most significant details in the story with vivid imagery and precise language to help readers visualize concrete experiences. To pull these together, the writer will need to work on pacing by prioritizing what details to expand and what to cut. Finally, the writer could dig deeper with his ultimate take-away to end more powerfully.

A Word about Language and Conventions (Gr 9 Narrative: Beginning)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.9-10.3
Grade 9
Exceeds

Finding Me

As the trees' leaves began to change color and fall to slightly sun scorched grass, I started to prepare for back to school season. It was different this year, I wasn't going to be returning to my old private middle school like last year. For my ninth grade year I had decided to attend the local public school. It wasn't huge or anything, around 350 students all together, but that was way bigger than anything I had ever experienced, having gone to an out in the country 100 student elementary and middle school my whole life, in the woods surrounded by green rolling hills and lush forest. I knew a couple people who were going to transfer with me, one was my best friend at the time however, I still couldn't help stressing about the year to come. I had never switched schools before and at my old school I knew every teacher and student, all the ins and outs. So with a stomach full of nerves and an almost empty backpack with pencils and a squashed sandwich, I stepped inside the stuffy warm building for my first day.

As the first few weeks flew by, I started to adjust to new teachers and classes. I quickly found that I knew just as much as the students who had came from the public middle school, and that having a two story school building wasn't too hard to approach. The first month passed with ease, and I no longer felt the urge to throw up while in the hallways alone. I liked my teachers, I didn't mind the homework, and I enjoyed walking home through afternoon sunlight. It wasn't until fall got a little colder and the first snowflakes started to fall on the now empty trees that I realized something was wrong. My old friends started to find people they enjoyed and started hanging out with new friends. They seemed happy. I wanted that too, and it wasn't like I didn't know how to be. I tried really hard to find people to be friends with. I joined clubs and started conversations

Engages and orients the reader by setting up a situation and introducing the narrator: the writer uses effective **description** to set the context of the narrative.

Orients the reader by setting out a problem and establishes a clear point of view before the action begins to unfold

The description and pacing help the writer **create a smooth progression of experiences**. The writer creates tension by building context before clarifying and exploring the central conflict.

before classes. I smiled to that one boy in my English class when I saw him at lunch and complemented the girl who sat across from me in science. No one really seemed too interested, and I found out that there was no one I really connected with in my grade. It was a lonely feeling really, lost in this space where you would expect to find someone. This thought, that there was no one who liked me or that I liked in the whole 9th grade started to grow on me. The girls who I grew up with started experiencing new things without me. My old best friend found a new one. Every day I looked around at my classmates feeling utterly unattached. No one liked me for no reason it seemed.

I found myself talking differently and lying about the things I liked so people would like me. I was struggling to figure out what people wanted from me as I fell into a routine of discomfort. What was wrong with me that I couldn't make friends? Those thoughts filled my mind as I started to become someone I didn't know. The other girls acted like they didn't understand the material in school so I acted that way too. I knew how to do the Pythagorean theorem homework. I knew how to make an atom model. But that wasn't the person who people wanted, so I slowly stopped being her. I still wasn't happy for some unimaginable, unexplainable reason. I thought the moment I had someone to eat with, or sit with, or hang out with after school, my problems would be solved and my life would transform into just what I always wanted. One weekend, as I sat on the checkered chair in my living room, petting my long haired brown and gray cat who was laid comfortably purring in my lap, I thought about who I was, and what I really deep down wanted. All I could think of was that it wasn't this; it was exhausting and draining. I would rather have no friends than no me. At the end of the day you are the only one that matters, because you aren't anyone at all if you aren't yourself.

That spring, I found a group of friends who I love very dearly. On top of that, I found a girl who understood me more than anyone else, who I loved spending time with, who I could be myself with all the

The writer's **reflection** conveys the magnitude of the conflict, and her **description** moves **the pacing** of the story to show her unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem. Alternating between concrete **descriptions and reflections** helps readers see the complexity of the conflict and adds depth to the story.

The **pacing** leads smoothly to the writer's reflection or big idea about life.

time, and it was me. I know it sounds cliché, in fact I think I read it on a sign in the bathroom of a Chinese restaurant in downtown Manhattan and rolled my eyes, but it took me a while to realize that I wouldn't have good friends unless they liked me for who I actually was. It was never something I had to figure out before, and it took rough months of not knowing who to be, to find a genuine life I enjoyed. More than anything this is something I never knew I was missing, but I encourage every person out there to be pushed into a tangle of unfamiliar faces and with the deep want to be accepted makes you struggle through uncertainty to find something certain.

Provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced over the course of the narrative:

although her conclusion could be seen as a cliché, the author notes this with a precise detail that shows self-awareness. She expands her concluding reflection to call to action for her readers.

Final Thoughts (Gr 9 Narrative: Exceeds)

Overall, this piece is effective because it lays out a significant story of self-transformation by emphasizing the most important moments, details, and dialogue in the story. Throughout the piece, narrative parts and reflection are interwoven. The pacing of the plot provides us with context and background so that we can understand that, although the take-away may seem trite, it is actually a powerful moment of realization based on the writer's year-long journey of self-discovery. The smooth progression in the sequencing of the story leads us to the universal idea articulated at the end. Because of the self-awareness, the detail, and the sequencing of the piece as a whole, this piece is exemplary.

A Word about Language and Conventions (Gr 9 Narrative: Exceeds)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.