
Using Narration as an Expository Technique

When is narration a pattern of exposition rather than a story told for its own purposes? The answer: when it serves to explain a subject, present conclusions, or support an interpretation or a thesis. For example, a writer who wishes to explain the role of risk-taking individuals (rather than corporations) in developing new ideas and products might tell the story of an entrepreneur who perfected the frozen French fry in the early 1950s only to discover that there was little demand for his product. The story would emphasize his perseverance in struggling to develop a market for the product—a perseverance that paid off for all concerned a decade later when the rapidly growing fast-food industry discovered the usefulness of frozen fries for ready-in-a-minute menus.

Whether you use narration as the pattern for an entire essay or for support and explanation within an essay, your readers will expect you to do certain things. They will expect your narrative to help them understand what happened, including the who, where, what, and to whom of events. They will expect the narrative to re-create events, showing (through concrete detail or the actual words of participants) rather than merely telling what happened (through summary). Finally, your readers will expect your narrative to help them understand the significance of the events. They will look for the point you are making, for what you have to say about the events, or for the way the events support your thesis.

In a book explaining the extraordinary character and physical courage of early Antarctic explorers, the writer Edwin Mickleburgh offers the following narrative to support his thesis about the explorer Ernest Shackleton's abilities as a leader and about the courage of his crew.

For anyone who has looked up from the sullen South Georgia shore [an island near Antarctica] towards the soaring, razor-edged peaks and the terrible chaos of glaciers topped by swirling clouds and scoured by mighty winds, the knowledge of the crossing made by these three men adds a wider dimension to an already awe inspiring sight. How they did it, God only knows, but they crossed the island in thirty-six hours. They were fortunate that the weather held, although many times great banks of fog rolled in from the open sea, creeping toward them over the snow and threatening to obscure their way. Confronted by precipices of ice and walls of rock they had often to retrace their steps adding many miles to the journey. They walked almost without rest. At one point they sat down in an icy gully, the wind blowing the drift around them, and so tired were they that Worseley and Crean fell asleep immediately. Shackleton, barely able to keep himself awake, realized that to fall asleep under such conditions would prove fatal. After five minutes he woke the other two, saying that they had slept for half an hour.

— Edwin Mickleburgh,
Beyond the Frozen Sea: Visions of Antarctica

WHY USE NARRATION?

Perhaps the most familiar form of expository narrative is the personal narrative, based on personal experience or observation, that offers insights into events or conclusions about relationships and the importance of certain kinds of experience. These include memoirs focusing on the author's personal and intellectual development, on an unusual and significant childhood event, or on other experiences. They include autobiographies of media stars, politicians, and other well-known people, especially those that shed light on the fields in which they have worked or on the important events they have witnessed. And they include personal narratives embedded in other kinds of works in order to give the works a sense of authenticity.

Another use of narrative is to present a profile on an unfamiliar or unusual activity or the people involved in it. Typically, such a narrative begins by presenting an interesting person in action (a day in the life of a computer game creator, for example) or by focusing on an activity (workers changing light bulbs on the spire of the Empire State Building; divers searching in deep water for wreckage from an airplane crash). As a way of creating drama and interest, such narratives frequently reveal surprising tensions or contradictions, such as the quiet home life and personal kindness of an offshore boat racer also known for his fearlessness, abrasiveness, spectacular crashes, and narrow escapes from death.

A narrative can also provide a framework for commentary and analysis, with passages of narrative interspersed with discussions of the significance and implications of the events. Or narratives can add convincing detail or emotional force to explanations built around some other expository pattern, such as comparison (Chapter 5), cause-and-effect (Chapter 8), or definition (Chapter 9).

CHOOSING A STRATEGY

A narrative is a chronological account of events. You do not always have to present the events in chronological order or give them all equal emphasis. When you are creating an event for expository purposes, begin your planning process with questions like these:

- What events are most important to my purpose for writing?
- What ideas and emotions surrounding the events are worth sharing with my readers?
- What point do I want to make with this narrative?

Your answers to questions like these should help you limit the time frame of your narrative and focus on the most important events of the story. Many writers are gripped by a compulsion to get all the details of a story down—important and unimportant. Radical surgery often helps. Instead of covering a whole week or day, consider focusing on the single most important incident—the four or five minutes when all the forces came together—and summarizing the rest.

Remember that you can arrange the events to suit your purpose(s). In basic form, a narrative sets the scene; introduces characters; presents, in chronological order, episodes that introduce a conflict or prepare for the central event; then, finally, explores in detail the most important incident in which the conflict is resolved or the writer's outlook is made clear. Yet the chronological approach can make it hard to emphasize the most important element. You may instead want to start in the middle of things, perhaps at the climactic episode, and fill in prior events through flashbacks. Or you might stop in the middle of events to provide important background information or comment on the characters and their actions.

And you need to choose whether to provide an explicit thesis statement to organize your narrative and direct commentary on the events, or to let the events speak for themselves, assuming that their relationship to your main point will be sufficiently clear to readers.

DEVELOPING A NARRATIVE

As you draft and revise a narrative, pay attention to the following concerns that can contribute to the success (or failure) of your efforts.

- **Selection of Details.** You will probably have many more details you might include in a narrative than you need. Keep in mind that too many details can overwhelm readers, making them lose sight about the point the narrative is making or the explanation it is offering. Focused, unified writing makes use only of those details that are most relevant to the writer's purpose and desired effect. Whenever possible, try to include concrete, specific details that make the narrative vivid and believable and that will be likely to hold your readers' interest.
- **Time Order.** You can employ straight chronology, relating events as they happened, or the flashback method, leaving the sequence temporarily in order to go back and relate some now-significant happening of a time prior to the main action. If you use flashback, do so deliberately, not merely because you neglected to mention the episode earlier.

- Transitions. Watch out for overly simple and repetitive transitions between events in the narrative: “And then we....And then she....And then we...” As you revise, make a conscious effort to create variety in transitions: “next,” “following,” “subsequently,” “as a consequence,” “reacting to,” “later,” “meanwhile,” “at the same time,” “concurrently,” and the like.
- Point of View. Decide whether you want to tell the story from the point of view of a participant, such as yourself or a character, or from the overall perspective of a spectator. The vividness and immediacy possible from a participant’s point of view can make the narrative more dramatic, but the spectator’s point of view can allow for an easier transition from narrative to commentary and may be especially useful in expository writing. Whichever point of view you choose, keep it consistent throughout the narrative.
- Dialogue. Remember that quoting the words of participants can help make narrative more convincing and dialogue, which can reveal conflicting perspectives among the participants, can also be a springboard to your commentary on the meaning of the events.

Student Essay

One important use of narrative in expository writing is to explore values and the ways they change. In the following essay, Hrishikesh Unni uses flashback and a dream sequence to explain a set of personal values – love of ivory and of ivory carvings—that may be unfamiliar to many of his readers. He then returns to the main narrative of his encounter with a herd of elephants in Zambia and uses it to explain his change in attitude toward ivory collecting.

Elephants, Ivory, and an Indelible Experience
by Hrishikesh Unni

The roar of the engine increased to a crescendo as the driver revved the engine of the open van. This sound broke the monotonous atmosphere of the dry and deserted African grassland of the Luangwa Valley in Zambia and made me shift in my rear seat. I had been sitting there for at least three hours since noon and had not seen any game, apart from the impala and zebra that intermittently spotted the grasslands. These creatures are a common sight in all national parks in Zambia, including the Luangwa. The drought had taken its toll. What was once a land filled with green vegetation was turned into a brown and heavily scorched area by the menacing October sun that was callously beating down on my back. I clutched my Canon camera even more firmly and could feel the heat radiating from the surface of its black case.

“You sure are unlucky, aren’t you, Hrishi? No elephants yet!” said Musa, the guide, who was the only other person in the spacious van besides Banda.

Banda was a local driver who could only speak the local language, Nyanga. I merely nodded to this statement, admitting my disappointment. I had come all the way from Ndola (another town in Zambia) to see the well-known elephants of the Luangwa National Park. I had given up hope because it was the third and final day of my visit, and I had not seen any so far. What irritated me was the fact that I had lost a long-awaited opportunity to see these beasts. To overcome my disappointment, I looked at the metallic body of the van that was painted white. It blazed in the sun and blinded my eyes. It reminded me of something I had once loved and treasured: ivory.

I had an affinity for ivory. I loved its color, texture, and appearance. My positive feelings for this substance had begun after I received my first ivory carving for my ninth birthday from a Zambian friend. It was a superb carving of a baby elephant, and I instantly liked it. I would gaze at it, admiring its dominant white color and its smooth texture. Also, its different shades of light brown never seemed to bore me. Since receiving that gift, I had bought every ivory item I could get my hands on and had a magnificent collection that I kept in my room.

My eyes could no longer take the glare and in an attempt to reduce the strain, I allowed my eyelids to drop over them. I realized how tired I was when I closed my eyes. Every muscle in my body seemed to be screaming in desperation, ordering my brain to sleep. I felt sleep gradually overtake me like an ivy conquering an old dilapidated castle. Soon I was fast asleep and dreaming of the time....

I entered my room and switched on my titanium-white tube light. I stared in awe as the light fell on my ivory collection, enhancing its already immaculate white coating. The furniture in my room consisted of a bed, a table, a chair, and a couple of shelves that were attached to the wall. It was decorated with my extravagant ivory collection. I stood at the doorway and began surveying the room, casting my eyes on each and every piece of ivory. I admired and absorbed every detail of the carvings and was aware of the hours of work involved in creating a single delicate carving from a long curved elephant tusk. The dexterity and skill the African craftsmen possessed amazed me, and I never got tired of looking at my collection. I saw a variety of things: old traditional men, dogs, a range of birds, daggers, kudu, impala, elephants, rhino, leopards, cheetahs—all in ivory. My eyes finally came to rest on the carving I admired the most—an elephant bull, which I had named Tusker Bull. It was the largest piece I had. Its place on the highest shelf and its majestic posture gave it an authority over the other animals in my collection. Its ominous, evil eyes and its cocked ears portrayed tyranny. I had a sudden urge to look into its lifeless eye. I daringly did this and saw a look I had never seen before. It was one of anger and rage. This look sent a chill down my spine as I wondered if my imagination was mocking me. The look in its eye seemed to be saying....

“Wake up, Hrishi, elephants!” shouted the guide.

I awoke with a jump, expecting to see my room, but the heat waves of the national park that enveloped me made me aware that I was a long way away from there. The painful process of adjusting to the amber sunlight took quite a while. The sky was an orange-yellow, and the ground seemed to have darkened to a beige color. It was nearly dusk, and I realized I had been sleeping for at least two hours. Musa repeated the word “elephant,” the word I longed to hear. I knew he had spotted a couple of them.

“Where?” I asked anxiously.

He pointed in between two brown-colored thickets and said, “By that dry waterhole.”

He was right, and I could see the posterior of two African elephants. I could not see the entire waterhole because the dry trees and scrub that had adapted to drought conditions partially obliterated our view. I was filled with excitement as images of elephants and my ivory collection flashed in my mind. I quickly set my camera to “operate” as the driver steered the van toward the elephants. We took an unorthodox and meandering path toward the elephants. As the van cut through the dry scrub, I could hear the twigs being crushed by its enormous tires and the dry grass, grazing and caressing the sides of the van. We finally reached the brown-colored thicket, and the driver deftly steered around it enabling us to see the entire expanse of the waterhole that merely had shallow puddles of water.

What we saw shocked us. There were not two elephants; there were two thousand of them! From where we were before, we could only get a glimpse of this enormous herd.

“What a sight! Ten years in this business, and I have not seen this many at once!” exclaimed Musa.

“Hitut, hitut!” said Banda, in awe.

Everywhere I looked, I only saw elephants. They completely superimposed the entire landscape, which now looked like a dark gray Persian carpet. The faint sunlight that reflected off the elephants transformed the color of their bodies to a stone-gray. It was an absolutely fantastic and awesome sight! I began surveying them in the manner I surveyed my ivory collection in my dream, slowly and meticulously, but this time I wasn’t looking at elephant ivory carvings but at real elephants. My eyes swept across the herd, and I was amazed at the unique behavior of each individual elephant I saw. There were numerous bulls with gigantic tusks. Their white tusks contrasted with their black bodies and made me think of ivory. From our position the tusks looked like curved toothpicks. The females were nurturing and tending to their playful calves. The elephants were of different sizes, but all the bulls were above eleven feet. Their postures conveyed a strong sense of magnanimity as they marched slowly in unison, every step serving a purpose. I admired the ease with which they moved, taking all the time in the world. They deliberately swung their trunks from side to side, like pendulums, and their tails moved naturally to their rhythmic walk. The mild deep grunts of the bulls were amplified by the wind that blew toward us. This natural sound enabled them to coax the members of the herd that were extremely slow. The pitch of this sound was lower than the sound the baby elephants made, which was like notes played on a trumpet that was not in tune. The calves pranced around playfully and used their trunks to mock and tease each other, not aware of their vulnerability to predators. A huge bull raised its head and arched its trunk in a form of imperious salute. He was definitely the largest and seemed to be leading the herd, ready to admonish the herd of any potential danger. I wanted a photo of this elephant.

“Let’s get closer, I want a photo of that bull,” I said, pointing to the conspicuous animal.

“I think we’ll be asking for trouble if we get any closer. This herd is definitely overprotective because there are so many young,” replied Musa.

“Oh, come on, this is the only opportunity we’ve had of seeing so many elephants. I mean, this is a rare sight, and we haven’t seen any all day. I want that bull. We must get closer,” I persisted.

Musa and Banda conversed in the local language about my idea. I could tell Banda was not pleased, but finally he reluctantly nodded his head in apparent consent.

“Okay, but Banda says only a couple of meters,” he said firmly.

I gave them both a “thumbs up” sign showing my appreciation. Banda furtively drove the van toward the herd that had not noticed us yet, and he stopped near it. As a precaution he left the engine on and did not remove his foot from the accelerator, establishing a ready position to take off if something went terribly wrong. From the expressions on Banda’s and Musa’s faces, I could tell that they were not pleased. I was told that the elephants were used to the sound of the van, and if you maintained a safe distance, you would be fine even if they were aware of you. I knew the elephants had seen us because some turned their heads in our direction.

Now we were a dangerous fifteen meters from the herd, and I was now in a position to take a photo of the largest elephant that was closer to us than the rest of the herd. I set the flash on my camera and peered at the bull through the eyepiece. It was out of focus, and I had the lateral view of the elephant. I quickly brought it into focus and waited, hoping it would turn toward me. I had to wait for approximately forty seconds until the moment I longed for arrived, but it was a moment I have never forgotten to this day. The bull turned its head towards me, and I stared into its eye the way I stared into the eye of the elephant carving in my dream. I saw the same look of rage and anger in its eye. The menacing look seemed to be accusing me of an unforgivable crime I seemed to have committed. I avoided its eyes and pressed the button on my camera. This was a big mistake because the flash disturbed the elephant, and it let out an ear-shattering sound that I had never heard before. This sound seemed to be the warning alarm because it caused the whole herd to simultaneously bellow in this fashion. It sounded like a loud never-ending echo, which punished our ears. The ground reverberated beneath us as they moved impetuously and tried to form a cordon around their young. There were so many of them, causing them to nearly trample on each other. Some began running away from us, while others advanced toward us, their ears flapping rapidly and fervently in a form of defense. What had once been a calm and benign atmosphere turned into a calamitous one at the push of a camera button.

I was speechless and could hear Musa shouting, “Tieni, tieni fast!” to the driver. Instinctively, Banda slammed the foot on the accelerator causing the engine to roar strongly, but this sound was barely audible due to the louder angry grunts of the elephants. He then turned the van away from the herd in an attempt to reach safety.

“Abuil abuil ei tiuti hamba isa tieni tieni fast!” shouted Musa frantically to Banda as he ducked below a seat. I did not know what this had meant, but I soon found out. The massive bull, which I had tried to photograph, began charging at us from the rear, flapping its ears vigorously and grunting vehemently. Its tusks were raised, like a tank with two white-colored barrels, ready for battle. I had a clear view of its tusks and they made me think of ivory—yet not as a smooth and attractive substance, as I once did, but as something dangerous to be in possession of. Now the thought of ivory did not amaze me but frightened me. I have never seen ivory the same way since that day. At that moment, the image of Tusker Bull, my biggest piece in the ivory collection, flashed into my mind. It seemed as if it had come alive and was after me. I was surprised at the pace the bull was running because I didn’t expect such a large animal to run at such a fast speed. I honestly thought I was going to die and was terrified because it was merely ten feet away from the van and was gaining on us. I held on to the side of the van and shut my eyes, not looking behind me. Yet, I could see the elephant in my mind, charging angrily at us. Banda was doing his best to escape from this animal, but his efforts seemed to be futile.

It seemed hours had passed when suddenly Musa yelled in relief, “It’s stopped! It’s stopped!” pointing at the elephant that had become stationary.

I gave an indignant salute that meant to say, “Don’t ever come near my herd again. We are much more powerful than you.”

“Hiny in hyi it fl,ungo,” replied Banda in a tone of relief.

“Are you all right?” Musa asked me.

Since I was in a state of shock, I did not say a word and merely nodded.

“We’ll be at the lodge soon so don’t worry. It’s over, and everything will be all right,” said Musa.

I responded to him with a slight smile and then closed my eyes, while thinking of my close brush with death. The roar of the engine increased to a crescendo as the driver revved the engine of the open van and followed the dusty route to Mfuwe Lodge of the Luangwa National Park of Zambia.

The ten-minute encounter with the elephants and the charging bull changed my perspective of elephants and gave me second thoughts about collecting ivory. This frightening experience made me aware of how protective an elephant community is and of the similarities in its character to that of a human society. It was during this time that I realized the natural power these animals possess and that a human is only able to overpower them with the use of guns and other weapons. My respect for these animals and nature in general has increased. I felt that the elephants were trying to make me aware of the cruelty of people and how they have killed elephants to get ivory. Just the fact that I collected ivory betrayed my insensitivity toward these creatures. I burned my collection when I got home, and now I am no longer interested in collecting ivory. Now I don’t value my collection in terms of money but in terms of the amount of life that was wasted in obtaining every piece that was present in my collection. I was taught a lesson by the victims that I feel is the best way to be punished. I will never collect ivory again, and I am planning to become part of the organization that plans to ban ivory and abolish poaching. Yes, the actual substance of ivory I will continue to admire, but differently, because I now think that ivory looks best on an elephant and not as carvings placed on a shelf in my room.

MARTIN GANSBERG was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1920 and received a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from St. John's University. He has been an editor and reporter for the New York Times, including a three-year period as editor of its international edition in Paris. He also served on the faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University. Gansberg has written for many magazines, including Diplomat, Catholic Digest, Facts, and U.S. Lady.

38 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police

"38 Who Saw Murder..." was written for the New York Times in 1964, and for obvious reasons it has been anthologized frequently since then. Cast in a deceptively simple news style, it still provides material for serious thought, as well as a means of studying the use and technique of narration.

For more than half an hour 38 respectable, law-abiding citizens in Queens watched a killer stalk and stab a woman in three separate attacks in Kew Gardens.

Twice their chatter and the sudden glow of their bedroom lights interrupted him and frightened him off. Each time he returned, sought her out, and stabbed her again. Not one person telephoned the police during the assault; one witness called after the woman was dead.

That was two weeks ago today.

Still shocked is Assistant Chief Inspector Frederick M. Lussen, in charge of the borough's detectives and a veteran of 25 years of homicide investigations. He can give a matter-of-fact recitation on many murders. But the Kew Gardens slaying baffles him — not because it is a murder, but because the "good people" failed to call the police.

"As we have reconstructed the crime," he said, "the assailant had three chances to kill this woman during a 35-minute period. He returned twice to complete the job. If we had been called when he first attacked, the woman might not be dead now."

This is what the police say happened beginning at 3:20 A.M. in the staid, middle-class, tree-lined Austin Street area:

Twenty-eight-year-old Catherine Genovese, who was called Kitty by almost everyone in the neighborhood, was returning home from her job as manager of a bar in Hollis. She parked her red Fiat in a lot adjacent to the Kew Gardens Long Island Rail Road Station, facing Mowbray Place. Like many residents of the neighborhood, she had parked there day after day since her arrival from Connecticut a year ago, although the railroad frowns on the practice.

She turned off the lights of her car, locked the door, and started to walk the 100 feet to the entrance of her apartment at 82-70 Austin Street, which is in a Tudor building, with stores in the first floor and apartments on the second.

The entrance to the apartment is in the rear of the building because the front is rented to retail stores. At night the quiet neighborhood is shrouded in the slumbering darkness that marks most residential areas.

Miss Genovese noticed a man at the far end of the lot, near a seven-story apartment house at 82-40 Austin Street. She halted. Then, nervously, she headed up Austin Street toward Lefferts Boulevard, where there is a call box to the 102nd Police Precinct in nearby Richmond Hill.

She got as far as a street light in front of a bookstore before the man grabbed her. She screamed. Lights went on in the 10-story apartment house at 82-67 Austin Street, which faces the bookstore. Windows slid open and voices punctuated the early-morning stillness.

Miss Genovese screamed: "Oh, my God, he stabbed me! Please help me! Please help me!"

From one of the upper windows in the apartment house, a man called down: "Let that girl alone!"

The assailant looked up at him, shrugged and walked down Austin Street toward a white sedan parked a short distance away. Miss Genovese struggled to her feet.

Lights went out. The killer returned to Miss Genovese, now trying to make her way around the side of the building by the parking lot to get to her apartment. The assailant stabbed her again.

"I'm dying!" she shrieked, "I'm dying!"

Windows were opened again, and lights went on in many apartments. The assailant got into his car and drove away. Miss Genovese staggered to her feet. A city bus, Q-10, the Lefferts Boulevard line to Kennedy International Airport, passed. It was 3:35 A.M.

The assailant returned. By then, Miss Genovese had crawled to the back of the building, where the freshly painted brown doors to the apartment house held out hope for safety. The killer tried the first door; she wasn't there. At the second door, 82-62 Austin Street, he saw her slumped on the floor at the foot of the stairs. He stabbed her a third time – fatally.

It was 3:50 by the time the police received their first call, from a man who was a neighbor of Miss Genovese. In two minutes they were at the scene. The neighbor, a 70-year-old woman, and another woman were the only persons on the street. Nobody else came forward.

The man explained that he had called the police after much deliberation. He had phoned a friend in Nassau County for advice and then he had crossed the roof of the building to the apartment of the elderly woman to get her to make the call.

"I didn't want to get involved," he sheepishly told the police.

Six days later, the police arrested Winston Moseley, a 29-year-old business-machine operator, and charged him with homicide. Moseley had no previous record. He is married, has two children and owns a home at 133-19 Sutter Avenue, South Ozone Park, Queens. On Wednesday, a court committed him to Kings County Hospital for psychiatric observation.

When questioned by the police, Moseley also said that he had slain Mrs. Annie May Johnson, 24, of 146-12 133rd Avenue, Jamaica, on Feb. 29 and Barbara Kralik, 15, of 174-17 140th Avenue, Springfield Gardens, last July. In the Kralik case, the police are holding Alvin L. Mitchell, who is said to have confessed to that slaying.

The police stressed how simple it would have been to have gotten in touch with them. "A phone call," said one of the detectives, "would have done it." The police may be reached by dialing "O" for operator or SPring 7-3100.

Today witnesses from the neighborhood, which is made up of one-family homes in the \$35,000 to \$60,000 range with the exception of the two apartment houses near the railroad station, find it difficult to explain why they didn't call the police.

A housewife, knowingly if quite casually, said, "We thought it was a lover's quarrel." A husband and wife both said, "Frankly, we were afraid." They seemed aware of the fact that events might have been different. A distraught woman, wiping her hands on her apron, said, "I didn't want my husband to get involved."

One couple, now willing to talk about that night, said they heard the first screams. The husband looked thoughtfully at the bookstore where the killer first grabbed Miss Genovese.

"We went to the window to see what was happening," he said, "but the light from our bedroom made it difficult to see the street." The wife, still apprehensive, added: "I put out the light and we were able to see better."

Asked why they hadn't called the police, she shrugged and replied: "I don't know."

A man peeked out from the slight opening in the doorway to his apartment and rattled off an account of the killer's second attack. Why hadn't he called the police at the time? "I was tired," he said without emotion. "I went back to bed."

It was 4:25 A.M. when the ambulance arrived to take the body of Miss Genovese. It drove off. "Then," a solemn police detective said, "the people came out."

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What is Gansberg's central (expository) theme? How might he have developed this theme without using narration at all? Specify what patterns of exposition he could have used instead. Would any of them have been as effective as narration for the purpose? Why, or why not?
2. Why has this narrative account of old news (the murder made its only headlines in 1964) retained its significance to this day? Are you able to see in this event a paradigm of any larger condition or situation? If so, explain, using examples as needed to illustrate your ideas.

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What standard introductory technique is exemplified in the first paragraph? (“Guide to Terms”: Introductions.) How effective do you consider it? If you see anything ironic in the fact stated there, explain the irony. (Guide: Irony.)
2. Where does the main narration begin? What, then, is the function of the preceding paragraphs?
 3. Study several of the paragraph transitions within the narration itself to determine Gansberg’s method of advancing the time sequence (to avoid overuse of “and then”) What is the technique? Is another needed? Why, or why not?
4. What possible reasons do you see for the predominant use of short paragraphs in this piece? Does this selection lose any effectiveness because of the short paragraphs?
5. Undoubtedly, the author selected with care the few quotations from witnesses that he uses. What principle or principles do you think applied to his selection?
6. Explain why you think the quotation from the “solemn police detective” was, or was not, deliberately and carefully chosen to conclude the piece. (Guide: Closings.)
7. Briefly identify the point of view of the writing. (Guide: Point of View.) Is it consistent throughout? Show the relation, as you see it, between this point of view and the author’s apparent attitude toward his subject matter.

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Why do you think the author used no difficult words in this narration? Do you find the writing at all belittling to college people because of this fact? Why, or why not?

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Gansberg’s narration is written as a news account except that it clearly editorializes about the apathetic attitude of citizens. Working in a group, identify the places in the essay that Gansberg injects his bias. With your group, rewrite those sections where Gansberg expresses his perspective, taking the opposite point of view – supporting people who do not get involved in a situation like the one presented in the essay.
2. Considering Audience: The general plot of this story is as believable for audiences of the twenty-first century as it was for audiences of the 1960s – perhaps even more so because levels of violence in society have increased in the intervening decades. However, how might the behaviors of the people involved have been different if the incident had occurred today? Write out your answer and a brief explanation of it.
3. Developing an Essay: Though he certainly has his own view of the events he reports, Gansberg allows readers to question the motivations of the observers and to make their own judgments about the lack of involvement. Prepare an account of some incident you witnessed and use a similar approach. Call attention to the various motivations expressed by the participants, to any inconsistencies in their behavior, and to any other elements you wish readers to analyze and question. The event itself need not be of more than local significance (an account of a meeting or a sports event can offer interesting insights, for example), but your exposition should offer readers insights worth considering.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION are on pp.513–514 at the end of this chapter.)

GEOFFREY CANADA is the President/CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City.

Pain

"Pain," an excerpt from the book *Reaching Up for Manhood*, draws on the writer's training and experience as a psychologist. He uses the narrative to explain the power of memory in our lives, especially memory of painful experiences. His particular focus is on boys and on the ways they are taught to repress the wounds caused by painful experiences. Nonetheless, it should be easy for readers to apply his insights to the experiences of girls.

Boys are taught to suffer their wounds in silence. To pretend that it doesn't hurt, outside or inside. So many of them carry the scars of childhood into adulthood, never having come to grips with the pain, the anger, the fear. And that pain can change boys and bring doubts into their lives, though more often than not they have no idea where those doubts come from. Pain can make you afraid to love or cause you to doubt the safety of the ground you walk on. I know from my own experience that some pain changes us forever.

It all started because there was no grass. Actually, there was grass, you just couldn't walk on it.

In the late fifties and early sixties, the projects were places people moved to get away from tenement buildings like mine. We couldn't move into the projects because my mother was a single parent. Today most projects are crammed full of single parents, but when I was a child your application for the projects was automatically rejected if that was your situation. The projects were places for people on the way up. They had elevators, they were well maintained, and they had grass surrounding them. Grass like we had never seen before. The kind of grass that was like walking on carpet. Grass that yelled out to little girls and boys to run and tumble and do cartwheels and roll around on it. There was just one problem, it was off limits to people. All the projects had signs that said "Keep Off the Grass." And there were men keeping their eyes open for children who dared even think of crossing the single-link chain that enclosed it. The projects didn't literally have the only grass we could find in the Bronx. Crotona Park, Pelham Bay Park, and Van Cortland Park were available to us. But the grass in those parks was a sparse covering for dirt, rocks, and twigs. You would never think about rolling around in that grass, because if you did you'd likely be rolling in dog excrement or over a hard rock.

There was one other place where we found grass in our neighborhood. Real grass. Lawn-like grass. It was in the side yard of a small church that was on the corner of Union Avenue and Home Street. The church was small and only open on Sundays. The yard and its precious grass were enclosed by a four-foot-high fence. We were not allowed in the yard by the pastor of the church.

Occasionally we would sneak in to retrieve a small pink Spaulding ball that had gone off course during a game of stickball or punch ball, but if we were seen climbing the fence there would be a scene, with screams, yells, and threats to tell our parents. So although we often looked at that soft grass with longing, the churchyard was off limits.

It would have stayed off limits if it had not been for football. Football came into my life one fall when I was nine years old, and I played it every fall for the rest of my childhood and adolescence. But football in the inner city looked very different than football played other places. The sewer manhole covers were the end zones. Anywhere in the street was legal playing territory, but not the sidewalk. There could be no tackling on pavement, so the game was called two-hand touch. If you touched an opponent with both hands, play had to stop. The quarterback called colorful plays: "Okay now. David, you go right in front of the blue Chevy. I'm gonna fake it to you. Geoff, see the black Ford on the right? No, don't look, stupid – they're gonna know our play. You go there, stop, then cross over toward William's stoop. I'll look for you short. Richard, go to the first sewer and turn around and stop. I'll pump it to you, go long, Geoff, you hike on three. Ready! Break!"

All we needed was grass. All our eyes were drawn to the churchyard. A decision had to be made. Rory was the first to bring it up. "We should sneak into the churchyard and play tackle."

We all walked over to Home Street and, out of sight of front windows, climbed over the fence and walked onto the grass. A thick carpet of grass that felt like falling on a mattress. We were in heaven.

Football in the churchyard was everything we had imagined. We could finally block and tackle and not worry about falling on the hard concrete or asphalt streets. We didn't have to worry about cars coming down the block the way we did when we played two-hand touch. And because we were able to tackle, we could have running plays. We loved it. We played for hours on end.

There was one problem with our football field, which was about thirty yards long and fifteen yards wide: at the far end there was a built-in barbecue pit, right in the middle of the end zone. If we were running with the football, or going out for a pass, we had to avoid the barbecue pit with its metal rods along the top, set into its concrete sides. We knew that no matter what you were doing when in that area of the yard, you had to keep one eye on the barbecue pit. To run into its concrete sides—or, even worse, the metal bars—would be very painful and dangerous.

I was fast and crafty. I loved to play split end on the offense. I could fake out the other kids and get free to catch the ball. I had one problem, though—I hadn't mastered catching a football thrown over my head. To do this you have to lean your head back and watch as the football descends into your hands. Keep your eye on the ball, that's the trick to catching one over the shoulder. We all wanted to go deep for "the bomb"—a ball thrown as far as possible, where a receiver's job is to run full speed and catch it with out-stretched hands. It took me forever to learn to concentrate on the football, with my head back as far as it would go, while running full speed. But finally I mastered it. I was now a truly dangerous receiver. If you played too far away from me I could catch the ball short, and if you came too close I could run right by the slower boys and catch the bomb.

The move I did on Ned was picture perfect. I ran ten yards, turned around, and faced Walter. He pumped the ball to me. I felt Ned take a step forward, going for the fake as I turned and ran right by him. Walter launched the bomb. As the football left his hand I stopped looking over my shoulder at him and started my sprint to the end zone. After running ten yards I tilted my head back and looked up at the bright blue fall sky. Nothing. I looked forward again and ran harder, then looked up again. There it was, the brown leather football falling in a perfect arc toward the earth, toward where I would be in three seconds, toward the winning touchdown.

And then pain. The bar of the barbecue pit caught me in midstride in the middle of my shin. I went down in a flurry of ashes, legs and arms flying every which way. The pain was all-enveloping. I grabbed my leg above and below where it had hit; I couldn't bear to touch the place where it had slammed into the bar. The pain was too much. I lay flat on the ground, trying to cry out. I could only make a humming sound deep in the back of my throat. My friends gathered around and I tried to act like a big boy, the way I had been taught. I tried not to cry. Then the pain consumed me and I couldn't see any of my friends anymore. I howled and then cried and then howled some more. The boys saw the blood seeping through my dungarees and my brother John said, "Let me see. Be still. Let me see." He rolled my pants leg up to my knee to look at the damage. All the other boys who had been playing or watching were in a circle around me. They all grimaced and turned away. I knew it was bad then, and I howled louder.

Catching the metal bar in full stride with my shin had crushed a quarter-sized hole in my leg. The skin was missing and even to this day I can feel the indentation in my shinbone where the bar gouged out a small piece of bone. I was off my feet for a few days and it took about two weeks for my shin to heal completely. Still, I was at the age where sports and friends meant everything to me. I couldn't wait to play football in the churchyard again, but I was a much more cautious receiver than before.

Several years later, when I finished the ninth grade at a junior high school in the South Bronx and was preparing to go to high school, I knew that my life had reached a critical juncture. My high school prospects were grim. I didn't pass the test to get into the Bronx High School of Science (I was more interested in girls than prep work), so my choices were either Morris High School or Clinton High School. Both of these were poor academically and suffered from a high incidence of violence. I asked my mother if I could stay with my grandparents in the house they had just built in Wyandanch, a quiet, mostly African-American town on Long Island. She agreed and they agreed, so I went there for my three years of high school.

That first year I went out for the junior varsity football team at Wyandanch High and played football as a receiver. I was a good receiver. The years of faking out kids on the narrow streets of the Bronx made me so deceptive that I couldn't be covered in the wide-open area of a real football field. But I had one problem – I couldn't catch the bomb. My coach would scream at me after the ball had slipped through my fingers or bounced off my hands. "Geoff! What's the matter with you? Concentrate, goddamn it! Concentrate!" I couldn't. No matter how I tried to focus on the ball coming down out of the sky, at the last minute I would have to look down. To make sure the ground wasn't playing tricks on me. No hidden booby traps. What happened in the churchyard would flash into my mind and even though I knew I was in a wide-open field, I'd have to glance down at the ground. I never made it as a receiver in high school. I finished my career as quarterback. Better to be looking at your opponent, knowing he wanted to tackle you, sometimes even getting hit without seeing it coming, but at least being aware of that possibility. Never again falling into the trap of thinking you were safe, running free, only you and the sky and a brown leather ball dropping from it.

Boys are conditioned not to let on that it hurts, never to say, "I'm still scared." I've written here only about physical trauma, but every day in my work I deal with boys undergoing almost unthinkable mental trauma from violence or drug abuse in the home, or carrying emotional scars from physical abuse or unloving parents. I have come to see that in teaching boys to deny their own pain we inadvertently teach them to deny the pain of others. I believe this is one of the reasons so many men become physically abusive to those they supposedly love. Pain suffered early in life often becomes the wellspring from which rage and anger flow, emotions that can come flooding over the banks of restraint and reason, often drowning those unlucky enough to get caught in their way. We have done our boys an injustice by not helping them to acknowledge their pain. We must remember to tell them "I know it hurts. Come let me hold you. I'll hold you until it stops. And if you find out that the hurt comes back, I'll hold you again. I'll hold you until you're healed."

Boys are taught by coaches to play with pain. They are told by parents that they shouldn't cry. They watch their heroes on the big screen getting punched and kicked and shot, and while these heroes might groan and yell, they never cry. And even some of us who should know better don't go out of our way to make sure our boys know about our pain and tears, and how we have healed ourselves. By sharing this we can give boys models for their own healing and recovery.

Even after I was grown I believed that ignoring pain was part of learning to be a man, that I could get over hurt by simply willing it away. I had forgotten that when I was young I couldn't run in an open field without looking down, that with no one to talk to me about healing, I spent too many years unable to trust the ground beneath my feet.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What is the main expository point (thesis) of the essay, and where does the writer state it? (See "Guide to Terms": Unity.)
2. What desires or aspirations did grass represent for the writer as a young man?
3.
 - a. What, according to the writer, are the consequences of painful experiences (physical or emotional) suffered in youth?
 - b. Why might the writer have chosen to focus on the consequences of pain for boys? How might the essay's conclusions be applied to or adapted for understanding the experiences of girls?

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. Which paragraphs in the essay are devoted primarily to retelling events? Which focus on analyzing the events and generalizing about behavior?
2. Why do you think the writer waited until the end of the essay to offer an extended discussion of the psychological consequences of painful events? Where else in the essay might he have undertaken such an explanation?
3. Discuss the strategies the writer employs to create transitions between the paragraphs in the following pairs: 1 and 2, 5 and 6, 6 and 7, 12 and 13, and 17 and 18.

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Discuss the use of the repetition of the word pain and its synonyms in Paragraph 17 to provide emphasis for the writer's main ideas. (Guide: Emphasis.)
2. For what purposes does the writer employ repetition and parallel structures in Paragraph 3? (Guide: Parallel Structures.)
3. Look up in a dictionary any of the following words with which you are unfamiliar: excrement (Par. 3); grimaced (13); trauma, wellspring (17).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, list and describe briefly the earliest recollections that each group member has of a painful event, either physical or emotional. From the list, choose several that your group finds particularly intriguing and plan a narrative essay around each one.
2. Considering Audience: How might girls' (and womens') experiences of pain differ from the experience described in Canada's essay? Write a brief essay exploring the similarities and differences between boys' and girls' experiences of pain.
3. Developing an Essay: Think of some central event from your youth that continues to affect your behavior today, positively or negatively. Write a narrative similar to Canada's, emphasizing that distinguishing part of your experience and commenting on the way such experiences are likely to affect many other people. To expand your perspective on the events, include your point of view, then and now, and describe the reactions of others to the events.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION are on pp. 513-514 at the end of this chapter.)

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Making the Grade

In some societies, including Japan, the pressures for social conformity are strong. Outsiders often assume that only two responses are possible: conformity or rebellion. As Kumiko Makihara's essay explains, however, the reality is more complex. Makihara looks at the pressure for conformity from the inside of a society – from the point of view of someone struggling to balance unconventional behavior and individual principles against conventional behavior and values. Her narrative explores the many complexities and negotiations involved in such a struggle, including both compromises and victories.

When I started inquiring about cram schools for my 5-year-old son's primary-school entrance exams, I knew I would be chastised for starting late. It was May, and most children in Tokyo had already been studying a year or two for the tests in November. "You haven't done any preparation yet?" one woman from a major chain of cram schools asked me. I confessed that I was a single parent working full time. "Oh, you are on your own," she replied. "A private school might be difficult."

Single working mothers are increasingly common in Japan but remain a rarity in the exclusive world of primary-school entrance examinations, where the two-parent family with a stay-at-home mom is the norm. Most schools consider a single mother too harried to raise a well-adjusted child and too poor to afford the tuition. For eight years, my ex-husband and I lived in Berlin, Beijing and Moscow, where we had adopted our son from Kazakhstan. After our divorce three years ago, my ex, who is American, stayed abroad and I came home with Yataro.

Since our return, I still hadn't grown accustomed to being underestimated. I kept hoping for the best for Yataro with or without a father. I was not alone. One aspiring mother put it plainly on an exam-information Web site fittingly called *Espoir*: "Can one not enter a private elementary school without a father?" The reply from the site wasn't encouraging: "The highly competitive schools or schools for boys and girls of good upbringing would be difficult," adding that for lower-ranked schools "we don't rule out the possibility."

Of course, Seikei Elementary, the school I was interested in, had five stars. My father is an alumnus, but that wasn't guaranteed to help. As luck would have it, Seikei is known for denying entrance to many children of graduates in the name of fairness.

During the next months, several afternoons a week, Yataro attended one cram school for his written exam and craft making and another for sports and more crafts. I relied on my mother and baby sitters to take him to the schools and often rushed in at the end when the teachers summarized the lesson and offered pointers to parents. "Don't take such a big bag to the test," one teacher told me, gesturing toward my briefcase. A handbag and tote were preferred. We were also instructed to wear dark suits to the schools even if we were just picking up an application.

These were easy compromises; my divorce was going to be more of a stumbling block. At a lecture on parental interviews, a former private-school teacher advised, "Just explain, before you take your seat, that you are divorced and therefore had to come to the interview alone." Translation: admit your guilt before being charged. Two of Yataro's cram-school teachers recommended toning down our application essay. There was no need to spell out that I was divorced and had adopted Yataro (another quirk considered suspect). I didn't want to hide facts I felt had shaped Yataro. But was I sacrificing my son's opportunities for some lofty principles? I caved in and took out the word "divorced" and just said that Yataro and I lived alone.

In the frenzied run-up to exams, a cram-school teacher asked students to name what they had eaten for breakfast. Yataro answered: yogurt, a kiwi and a prune, bread and cheese. "That is an excellent breakfast, everyone," the teacher exalted. "The school will think, There is a wonderful mother." Praised as a good mother before a room of full-time moms, I was beaming.

But later when I was coaching Yataro with another question—“When does your mother praise you?”—he replied, “When I give the correct response about breakfast.” I started to laugh then caught myself. Here I was twisting truths to come across as the best parent, and Yataro had called my bluff.

On interview day at Seikei, two days after Yataro took his written exam, mothers and fathers in nearly identical dark blue or black suits and children in navy shorts or skirts and white shirts filled the waiting room. I ran into a business acquaintance and her attractive husband. I wondered if Yataro had noticed that we were the only pair among threesomes.

First, the children were sent to classrooms where teachers observed them in group activities—Seikei’s alternative to individual child interviews. Once I was called, I entered a room with three young male teachers. I skipped the suggested apologetic divorce confession and sat down. One teacher asked, “What considerations do you have in raising Yataro?”

“He needs to be strong to survive societal prejudices,” I said. “But I hope he can also, because of his background, understand the pain of others and be that much kinder.”

Two days later, Yataro’s registration number was on the acceptance list posted at the school. I’ll never know what got him in, but standing there next to other parents, all in the requisite dark suits, I had become part of the group.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. List the ways that the writer and her son are “different” from the normal or conventional.
2. List the different ways people urge or pressure the writer to conform to expected behaviors.
3. When does she choose to conform? When does she stick to her individuality or “difference”?
4. What does the last sentence reveal about the essay’s theme: “I’ll never know what got him in, but standing there next to other parents, all in the requisite dark suits, I had become part of the group”?
5. Sum up the theme of this essay in a thesis statement of your own. (See “Guide to Terms”: Thesis Statement.)

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. How has the writer designed the opening sentence to alert readers that she will be talking about a culture unfamiliar to most of them?
2. What strategies does the writer employ to begin the essay? (Guide: Openings/Introductions.)
3. Does the introduction provide necessary background information? What more information might the writer provide, if any, to make the essay more effective?
4. Where in the essay does the writer present the situation or problem she plans to explore?
5. In addition to a narrative organization, this essay is arranged according to the various elements of the situation being discussed. Into what segments can the essay be divided?

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Why do you think the writer chose the word “chastised” in Paragraph 1 rather than more familiar words like “criticized” or “punished”? (Look up some of these words if you are not familiar with their meanings or connotations. (Guide: Connotation/Denotation.)
2. Where do the vocabulary and sentence structure in the quoted passages in the essay fit on a scale from informal to formal? (Guide: Colloquial Expressions, Syntax.) What does the level of formality indicate about the society and the pressures it produces on individuals?
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: chastised (Par. 1); harried (2); exalted (7); requisite (12).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: This essay consists of a series of conflicts in which the writer either compromises or refuses to compromise. Working in a group, identify each of these conflicts and identify the tone and language the writer uses to describe her response (compromise or refusal to compromise). Then compare the descriptions, answering these questions: Is there a consistent pattern in the way she narrates each kind of response? If so, what is it? If not, does she narrate each response differently, or does she take some other approach in which various kinds of responses are distinguished but not according to a clear plan?
2. Considering Audience: People who have not grown up in a culture that places a high value on conformity or who have not experienced pressures similar to those described in this essay may not respond to the essay in the same way as people who have. Create a brief essay describing the possible reactions of three different groups of readers, each differing from the other (and from the writer of the essay) in cultural background and experience. Include analysis of any strategies used in the essay to help readers with differing backgrounds and experiences understand the events being presented.
3. Developing an Essay: List several situations in which you have felt pressure to conform to social or cultural expectations that were contrary to your personal outlook, habits, or values. Create a narrative exploring the conflicts and your responses to them.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION are on pp. 513–514 at the end of this chapter.)

Issues and Ideas

Stories and Values

- George Orwell, *A Hanging*
- Wayne Worcester, *Arms and the Man*
- Chang-rae Lee, *Uncle Chul Gets Rich*

Sometimes speaking directly about our values or perspectives does not clarify or convey them effectively. The situation that gives rise to a particular moral judgment or that leads to an ethical perspective can give someone else a better understanding than a detailed definition or even a careful comparison of differing perspectives. The more complex the idea or outlook, the more we may need to know about the events surrounding it. A detailed narrative can perhaps give readers a better understanding of causes and effects than an explanation that attempts to isolate them from the surrounding details.

The three essays that follow demonstrate the effectiveness of narration as an expository pattern for dealing with questions of value. Capital punishment has been the subject of many argumentative and expository essays, but few have offered the kind of insight into the minds of the prisoner and of those responsible for carrying out the sentence that George Orwell provides in “A Hanging.” And few essays explore the moral ambiguities surrounding the practice as well as Orwell does.

Wayne Worcester’s “Arms and the Man” provides an insider’s view of some of the values associated with gun ownership and use. Although his perspective is in one way linked to his (and his friend’s) experience, it nonetheless gains power and depth for others from the same experience. Finally Chang-rae Lee, in “Uncle Chul Gets Rich,” uses narrative to explore interesting sets of values: personal, family, and cultural. He also uses the immigrant experience to explore American values from the perspective of outsiders struggling to become insiders.

George Orwell

GEORGE ORWELL (1903–1950), whose real name was Eric Blair, was a British novelist and essayist well known for his satire. He was born in India and educated at Eton in England; he was wounded while fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Later he wrote the books *Animal Farm* (1945), a satire on Soviet history; and *1984* (1949), a vivid picture of life in a projected totalitarian society. He was, however, also sharply aware of injustices in democratic societies and was consistently socialistic in his views. Many of Orwell’s essays are collected in *Critical Essays* (1946), *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (1950), and *Such, Such Were the Joys* (1953).

A Hanging

“A Hanging” is typical of Orwell’s essays in its setting—Burma—and in its subtle but biting commentary on colonialism, on capital punishment, and even on one aspect of human nature itself. Although he is ostensibly giving a straightforward account of an execution, the author masterfully uses descriptive details and dialogue to create atmosphere and sharply drawn characterizations. The essay gives concrete form to a social message that is often delivered much less effectively in abstract generalities.

It was in Burma, a sodden morning of the rains. A sickly light, like yellow tinfoil, was slanting over the high walls into the jail yard. We were waiting outside the condemned cells, a row of sheds fronted with double bars, like small animal cages. Each cell measured about ten feet by ten and was quite bare within except for a plank bed and a pot for drinking water. In some of them brown, silent men were squatting at the inner bars, with their blankets draped round them. These were the condemned men, due to be hanged within the next week or two.

One prisoner had been brought out of his cell. He was a Hindu, a puny wisp of a man, with a shaven head and vague liquid eyes. He had a thick, sprouting mustache, absurdly too big for his body, rather like the mustache of a comic man on the films. Six tall Indian warders were guarding him and getting him ready for the gallows. Two of them stood by with rifles and fixed bayonets, while the others handcuffed him, passed a chain through his handcuffs and fixed it to their belts, and lashed his arms tight to his sides. They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was like men handling a fish which is still alive and may jump back into the water. But he stood quite unresisting, yielding his arms limply to the ropes, as though he hardly noticed what was happening.

Eight o'clock struck and a bugle call, desolately thin in the wet air, floated from the distant barracks. The superintendent of the jail, who was standing apart from the rest of us, moodily prodding the gravel with his stick, raised his head at the sound. He was an army doctor, with a grey toothbrush mustache and a gruff voice. "For God's sake, hurry up, Francis," he said irritably. "The man ought to have been dead by this time. Aren't you ready yet?"

Francis, the head jailer, a fat Dravidian in a white drill suit and gold spectacles, waved his black hand. "Yes sir, yes sir," he bubbled. "All iss satisfactorily prepared. The hangman iss waiting. We shall proceed."

"Well, quick march, then. The prisoners can't get their breakfast till this job's over."

We set out for the gallows. Two warders marched on either side of the prisoner, with their rifles at the slope; two others marched close against him, gripping him by arm and shoulder, as though at once pushing and supporting him. The rest of us, magistrates and the like, followed behind. Suddenly, when we had gone ten yards, the procession stopped short without any order or warning. A dreadful thing had happened – a dog, come goodness knows whence, had appeared in the yard. It came bounding among us with a loud volley of barks and leapt round us wagging its whole body, wild with glee at finding so many human beings together. It was a large woolly dog, half Airedale, half pariah. For a moment it pranced around us, and then, before anyone could stop it, it had made a dash for the prisoner, and jumping up tried to lick his face. Everybody stood aghast, too taken aback even to grab the dog.

"Who let that bloody brute in here?" said the superintendent angrily. "Catch it, someone!"

A warder detached from the escort, charged clumsily after the dog, but it danced and gambolled just out of his reach, taking everything as part of the game. A young Eurasian jailer picked up a handful of gravel and tried to stone the dog away, but it dodged the stones and came after us again. Its yaps echoed from the jail walls. The prisoner, in the grasp of the two warders, looked on incuriously, as though this was another formality of the hanging. It was several minutes before someone managed to catch the dog. Then we put my handkerchief through its collar and moved off once more, with the dog still straining and whimpering.

It was about forty yards to the gallows. I watched the bare brown back of the prisoner marching in front of me. He walked clumsily with his bound arms, but quite steadily, with that bobbing gait of the Indian who never straightens his knees. At each step his muscles slid neatly into place, the lock of hair on his scalp danced up and down, his feet printed themselves on the wet gravel. And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped lightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path.

It is curious; but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we are alive. All the organs of his body were working – bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming – all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth-of-a-second to live. His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned – even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone – one mind less, one world less.

The gallows stood in a small yard, separate from the main grounds of the prison, and overgrown with tall prickly weeds. It was a brick erection like three sides of a shed, with planking on top, and above that two beams and a crossbar with the rope dangling. The hangman, a greyhaired convict in the white uniform of the prison, was waiting beside his machine. He greeted us with a servile crouch as we entered. At a word from Francis the two warders, gripping the prisoner more closely than ever, half led, half pushed him to the gallows and helped him clumsily up the ladder. Then the hangman climbed up and fixed the rope round the prisoner's neck.

We stood waiting, five yards away. The warders had formed in a rough circle round the gallows. And then, when the noose was fixed, the prisoner began crying out to his god. It was a high, reiterated cry of "Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!" not urgent and fearful like a prayer or cry for help, but steady, rhythmical, almost like the tolling of a bell. The dog answered the sound with a whine. The hangman, still standing on the gallows, produced a small cotton bag like a flour bag and drew it down over the prisoner's face. But the sound, muffled by the cloth, still persisted, over and over again: "Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!"

The hangman climbed down and stood ready, holding the lever. Minutes seemed to pass. The steady, muffled crying from the prisoner went on and on, "Ram! Ram! Ram!" never faltering for an instant. The superintendent, his head on his chest, was slowly poking the ground with his stick; perhaps he was counting the cries, allowing the prisoner a fixed number— fifty, perhaps, or a hundred. Everyone had changed colour. The Indians had gone grey like bad coffee, and one or two of the bayonets were wavering. We looked at the lashed, hooded man on the drop, and listened to his cries—each cry another second of life; the same thought was in all our minds; oh, kill him quickly, get it over, stop that abominable noise!

Suddenly the superintendent made up his mind. Throwing up his head he made a swift motion with his stick. "Chalo!" he shouted almost fiercely.

There was a clanking noise, and then dead silence. The prisoner had vanished, and the rope was twisting on itself. I let go of the dog, and it galloped immediately to the back of the gallows; but when it got there it stopped short, barked, and then retreated into a corner of the yard, where it stood among the weeds, looking timorously out at us. We went round the gallows to inspect the prisoner's body. He was dangling with his toes pointed straight downwards, very slowly revolving, as dead as a stone.

The superintendent reached out with his stick and poked the bare brown body; it oscillated slightly. "He's all right," said the superintendent. He backed out from under the gallows, and blew out a deep breath. The moody look had gone out of his face quite suddenly. He glanced at his wrist-watch. "Eight minutes past eight. Well, that's all for this morning, thank God."

The warders unfixed bayonets and marched away. The dog, sobered and conscious of having misbehaved itself, slipped after them. We walked out of the gallows yard, past the condemned cells with their waiting prisoners, into the big central yard of the prison. The convicts, under the command of warders armed with lathis, were already receiving their breakfast. They squatted in long rows, each man holding a tin pannikin, while two warders with buckets marched around ladling out rice; it seemed quite a homely, jolly scene, after the hanging. An enormous relief had come upon us now that the job was done. One felt an impulse to sing, to break into a run, to snigger. All at once everyone began chattering gaily.

The Eurasian boy walking beside me nodded towards the way we had come, with a knowing smile. "Do you know, sir, our friend (he meant the dead man) when he heard his appeal had been dismissed, he pissed on the floor of his cell. From fright. Kindly take one of my cigarettes, sir. Do you not admire my new silver case, sir? From the boxwallah, two rupees eight annas. Classy European style."

Several people laughed— at what, nobody seemed certain.

Francis was walking by the superintendent, talking garrulously: "Well, sir, all has passed off with the utmost satisfactoriness. It was all finished— flick! Like that. It iss not always so— oah, no! I have known cases where the doctor was obliged to go beneath the gallows and pull the prisoner's legs to ensure decease. Most disagreeable!"

"Wriggling about, eh? That's bad," said the superintendent.

"Ach, sir, it iss worse when they become refractory! One man, I recall, clung to the bars of hiss cage when we went to take him out. You will scarcely credit, sir, that it took six warders to dislodge him, three pulling at each leg. We reasoned with him, 'My dear fellow,' we said, 'think of all the pain and trouble you are causing to us!' But no, he would not listen! Ach, he wass very troublesome!"

I found that I was laughing quite loudly. Everyone was laughing. Even the superintendent grinned in a tolerant way. "You'd better all come out and have a drink," he said quite genially. "I've got a bottle of whisky in the car. We could do with it."

We went through the big double gates of the prison into the road. "Pulling at his legs!" exclaimed a Burmese magistrate suddenly, and burst into a loud chuckling. We all began laughing again. At that moment Francis' anecdote seemed extraordinarily funny. We all had a drink together, native and European alike, quite amicably. The dead man was a hundred yards away.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What was the real reason for the superintendent's impatience?
2. On first impression it may have seemed that the author gave undue attention to the dog's role in this narrative. Why was the episode such a "dreadful thing" (Par. 6)? Why did the author think it worth noting that the dog was excited at "finding so many human beings together"? Of what significance was the dog's trying to lick the prisoner's face?
3. Explain how the prisoner's stepping around a puddle could have given the author a new insight into what was about to happen (Par. 10).
4. Why was there so much talking and laughing after the hanging was finished?
5. What is the broadest meaning of Orwell's last sentence?

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. Cite examples of both objective and impressionistic description in the first paragraph.
2. What is the primary time order used in this narrative? If there are any exceptions, state where.
3. Considering the relatively few words devoted to them, several of the characterizations in this essay are remarkably vivid – a result, obviously, of highly discriminating selection of details from the multitude of those that must have been available to the author. For each of the following people, list the character traits that we can observe, and state whether these impressions come to us through details of description, action, and/or dialogue.
 - a. The prisoner
 - b. The superintendent
 - c. Francis
 - d. The Eurasian boy
4. Why do you think the author included so many details of the preparation of the prisoner (Par. 2)? Why did he include so many details about the dog and his actions? What is gained by the assortment of details in Paragraph 10?
5. How would you characterize the tone of this selection? (Guide: Style/Tone.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. A noteworthy element of Orwell's style is his occasional use of figurative language. Cite six metaphors and similes, and comment on the author's choice of them and on their effectiveness. (Guide: Figures of Speech.)
2. Orwell was always concerned with the precise effects that words could give to meaning and style. Cite at least six nonfigurative words that seem to you particularly well chosen for their purpose. Show what their careful selection contributes to the description of atmosphere or to the subtle meanings of the author. (Guide: Style/Tone.)

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Discuss in a group people who have jobs that place their "duty" in conflict with their "conscience." Choose one such person or profession and write a collaborative essay similar in style to Orwell's. You may choose to make group members responsible for one or two concrete examples each, to be combined into a unified paper.
2. Considering Audience: Orwell's approach in his essay makes his discussion of capital punishment approachable even to readers who may be in disagreement with his views. Identify places in the essay where Orwell deals with opposing views, and prepare an analysis of his success in dealing with them.
3. Developing an Essay: Draw on Orwell's expository technique in an essay of your own by recounting a minor incident (like the actions of the dog in "A Hanging") that led to much deeper insight. Or use a minor incident to reveal and emphasize insights that readers probably have not considered before.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION are on pp. 513–514 at the end of this chapter.)

WAYNE WORCESTER is a former newspaper reporter and editor. He now teaches journalism at the University of Connecticut.

Arms and the Man

In "Arms and the Man," first published as a newspaper essay, Wayne Worcester narrates a brief incident, largely through dialogue, that explores a variety of values and issues associated with guns and their personal use.

In an especially rural part of southern New Hampshire, where the hills in early spring roll to mottled green and the roads turn to deep mud-brown, I have two old friends who live as they please.

He drives a truck. She works in a dentist's office. They have three children, and on most days the kids' toys sprawl in abandon across the living-room floor, directly in front of the gun cabinet, which has no lock.

"Doesn't it bother you?" I asked on a recent visit. "The kids' playing around the gun cabinet?"

"Nope. We brought 'em up to not touch it."

He handed me his newest gun. It was flat and small, only slightly larger than my hand, and the room's bright light died on its coal-black barrel. No reflection. Not a hint.

"Isn't that a sweetheart?"

"Very small."

"It's hers, but it's got real stoppin' power. Great protection."

I popped the magazine out, and saw the stack of bullets.

"You always keep it loaded?" I asked.

"Course."

"She carry it?"

"No point havin' it, she gonna leave it to home."

"She works for a dentist, for Chrissake! He use this instead of Novocain? What's she need a gun for?"

His lips went tight, as though I'd insulted him, which I had.

"You never know."

"How did she get a permit?"

"A what? C'mon."

"Well, why's she carrying?"

"I told you. Protection."

"Right. What else have you got in there?"

"Couple rifles. Shotgun. My AR 15. God, that's fun. Last year, me and a couple guys from work, we just went out and set up a target on a red oak out back, and we hit it with the AR so many times the damned tree just broke in half like we'd sawed it off. Thing just toppled right over."

"Your neighbor must love you."

"Yeah, he called the cops up, but they didn't do nothing— just checked to see we was on our own property."

"'Live free or die,' right? What'd the neighbor do?"

"Bout three days later, he comes over. His wife's bein' a pain in the ass. He says, 'We're moving in two months, but if you keep the shootin' down till then, you can have this.'"

From the top shelf of the cabinet, my friend took down a long-barreled, chrome-plated .357-magnum, the kind of handgun that'll stop a speeding car, or most anything else.

"But this one here's my pride 'n' joy," he said. It was a .22-caliber handgun, jet black with a long, heavy barrel.

"Real accurate. Wanna try her out?"

We walked to the edge of the woods, and he set a bright-blue Maxwell House can swinging from a tree limb.

For a small-caliber weapon, the gun was bone-heavy, and in the palm of my hand it felt oddly substantial, as though it were even more than its true weight. I walked slowly back toward the house, flipped off the safety, turned – quickly, for some reason – and squeezed the trigger the instant the barrel fell in line with the target. The shot was loud. It was sharp and clear and flat, as though it had hard, cutting edges, and before the sound had died the can had jumped and the chamber slide had recoiled and kicked out a casing with that matchlessly pleasing sound that metal on metal can make only when the parts have been properly and ever-so-precisely machined. I was pleased, and I fired again, and then, quickly in the echo, twice again, and I could smell the shots and feel the recoil of the bone-weight as though it were an extension of me, and I squeezed the trigger again, and then again in affirmation, counting silently in the loud and hard flat noise and clink-sliding of the chamber – seven shots now – and the can danced some more and in a far shadow I thought I could see old man Bergevin, whom I'd worked for as a teenager and hated and do to this day, though he is long dead and not thought of in years. I considered him in his grave, all scraps and maggoty bone, and was glad. Eight shots, and the can finally fell to the ground, and I lowered the gun toward the fallen target and squeezed the trigger for the ninth time and sent the can skittering.

We were quiet on the way back. I was still listening to the gun, feeling its weight, thinking about a quip I'd overheard: "You know what N.R.A. stands for? Not a Rational Adult." I chuckled aloud.

"What?" my friend asked.

"Just thinking. You ever wonder who you really need protecting from?"

He just smiled.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Why, in Paragraph 2, does Worcester discuss the parents' careers, present a description of the toys, and mention the gun cabinet? What is the significance of these three topics mentioned in conjunction with each other?
2. Worcester says, "His lips went tight as though I'd insulted him, which I had" (Par. 14). What did he say that was potentially offensive? Was his friend justified in being insulted? Why, or why not?
3. What is the overall meaning of the last four paragraphs of the essay (31–34)? Who needs protecting, and from whom?

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. Worcester uses dialogue to present much of his narrative. How does this dialogue provide a context for the only substantially nonconversational section (Par. 30)? Is this heavy use of dialogue an effective technique? Please explain.
2. Identify the descriptive details in Paragraph 30. What ideas or qualities do they emphasize? (See "Guide to Terms": Emphasis.) How does this paragraph serve to unify the essay? (Guide: Unity.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Why does Worcester use few difficult words in this essay? Who is his target audience? Is it fair to say that he is belittling the characters in this essay by using such relatively simple language? Why, or why not?

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: "Arms and the Man" could serve as an introduction to a larger research essay on gun control. Working in a group, choose another controversial issue and write an anecdote similar in style to Worcester's (either fiction or nonfiction) that could be an introduction to an essay on that issue.
2. Considering Audience: What does Worcester assume about the attitude most of his readers will have toward gun use? Identify those places in the essay where he makes his assumptions about his audience clear. Then prepare an essay analyzing the way Worcester addresses, identifies, and interacts with his audience's attitudes.
3. Developing an Essay: Think of a time you disagreed with the course of behavior or values of a friend because of the implications of the action or behavior. Write an essay about that relationship, similar to Worcester's essay, and incorporate dialogue and detailed description in your narration.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION are on pp. 513–514 at the end of this chapter.)

CHANG-RAE LEE was born in South Korea in 1967. When he was 3 years old, he and his family emigrated to the United States. He is a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University. He earned his M.F.A. degree from the University of Oregon where he taught creative writing. Lee's novel, *Native Speaker* (1996), was awarded the Ernest Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for First Fiction. His second novel is entitled *A Gesture of Life* (1999).

Uncle Chul Gets Rich

In "Uncle Chul Gets Rich," first published in 1996, Lee offers a familiar narrative form—a story of success in business—set amid contrasting values and cultures typical of immigrant experiences. The issues Lee explores, however, will be familiar and important for most readers.

My father's youngest brother, Uncle Chul, shared the Lees' famously bad reaction to liquor, which was to turn beet-red in the face, grow dizzy and finally get sick. In spite of this, he was always happy to stay up late at family gatherings. After a few Scotches he would really loosen up, and, with the notable exception of my mother, we all appreciated his rough language and racy stories. Only when Mother came in from the kitchen would his talk soften, for he knew he had always fallen short in her eyes. If they were ever alone together, say in the kitchen, after dinner, he would use the most decorous voice in asking for a glass or a fresh bucket of ice, and even offer to help load the dishwasher or run an errand to the store.

On one of those nights we sped off, both happy for a break in the long evening. He asked me about school, what sports I was playing, but the conversation inevitably turned toward my parents, and particularly my mother—how much she had invested in me, that I was her great hope. I thought it was odd that he was speaking this way, like my other relatives, and I answered with some criticism of her—that she was too anxious and overbearing. He stared at me and, with a hard solemnity I had not heard from him before, said that my mother was one of the finest people one could ever know. He kept a grip on the wheel and in the ensuing quiet of the drive I could sense how he must have both admired and despised her. In many respects, my mother was an unrelenting woman. She tended to measure people by the mark of a few principles of conduct: ask no help from anyone, always plan for the long run and practice (her own variation of) the golden rule, which was to treat others much better than oneself.

In her mind, Uncle Chul sorely lacked on all these accounts. In the weeks following our drive, my father would be deciding whether to lend him \$10,000 to start a business. As always after dinner, my parents sat in the kitchen (the scent of sesame oil and pickled vegetables still in the air) and spoke in Korean, under the light of a fluorescent ring. My mother, in many ways the director of the family, questioned my uncle's character and will. Hadn't he performed poorly in school, failed to finish college? Hadn't he spent most of his youth perfecting his skills as a black belt in taekwondo and his billiards game? Wasn't he a gambler in spirit?

My father could defend him only weakly. Uncle Chul had a history of working hard only when reward was well within sight, like cash piled high on the end of a pool table. His older brothers were all respected professionals and academics. My father was a doctor, a psychiatrist who had taught himself English in order to practice in America. Uncle Chul had left Korea after a series of failed ventures and odd jobs, and found himself broke with a wife and new baby. How valuable were his taekwondo trophies now? What could he possibly do in this country?

My parents argued fiercely and my father left the kitchen. But as was my mother's way, she kept on pushing her side of the issue, thinking aloud. My father was throwing away his hard-earned money on the naïve wish that his little brother had magically changed. Uncle Chul was a poor risk and even now was complaining about his present job, hauling and cleaning produce for a greengrocer in Flushing. He would get to the store at 4 A.M. to prepare vegetables for the day's selling. While he shared a sofa bed with his nephew in his older brother's tiny apartment, his wife and infant daughter were still in Seoul, waiting for him to make enough money to send for them.

But his wages were only \$250 a week for 70 hours of work and he loathed the job, the brutal effort that went into clearing a few cents a carrot, a quarter a soda, the niggling, daily accrual. The owners themselves would toil like slaves to see a till full of tattered ones and fives at day's end.

I knew Uncle Chul craved the big score, the quick hit, a rain of cash. For the very reasons my mother had so little faith in him—his brashness, his flagrant ambitions—I admired him. Over Scotch and rice crackers, he would tell my father about the millions he was going to make by moving merchandise wholesale, in bigger-ticket items with decent margins. He would never touch another orange again. I remember my father absently nodding his head at each vague and grandiose idea, probably hearing my mother's harangues.

The other men in my father's family were thick-lensed scribblers who worked through their days from A to Z, assiduously removing uncertainty by paying close attention to the thousand details of each passing hour. My father worked long days at the hospital, and spent weekends pouring over volumes of Freud and Rank and Erickson in his second language, to "catch up" with the American doctors. When my father decided to lend Uncle Chul the \$10,000, making it clear that no further discussion was needed, my mother transferred her worrying energy squarely onto me. It seemed no accident that her latest criticism was that I was "always looking for the easy way." I had, in fact, been feeling moody and rebellious, weary of being a good student and good boy. I was in the eighth grade, and my friends were beginning to drink beer and smoke pot. I secretly resolved to join them.

I was also taking solo train trips from Pleasantville, N.Y., down to the city to visit my older cousins on the weekends, prompting questions from my mother about what kind of fun we were having. I didn't tell her that what thrilled me most was riding the elevated trains between Flushing and Grand Central, shuttling back and forth with the multitude. My new comer's heart was fearful and enthralled, and I naïvely thought Uncle Chul felt the same way. He had quit working for the greengrocer after getting the money, and brought over his wife and child. He was busy scouting out stores for his first business in America.

But Uncle Chul found that the leases for even the smallest stores were \$4,000 a month, and he seemed tense and even a little scared. I felt a strange pang of guilt because of the extra pressure on him—the \$10,000 and the tenuous faith behind it. The only thing worse than losing the money was what my mother would never have to mention again: that he started working a little too late.

But he did find a store, in the Bronx, and we drove down one Sunday to see it in all its new glory. It seemed as if half the tenement buildings on the block were burned out or deserted, and the sidewalks were littered with garbage, broken glass and the rubble of bricks and mortar. My father pulled up behind Uncle Chul's car and we peered out to see if we had the right address. The shop couldn't have been more than eight feet wide. A single foot-wide corridor running its length was lined with accessories, odd-lot handbags and tie clips and lighters; the stuff hung on plastic grids on the walls and overhead. In the back, there was a hot plate on the floor, two stools and a carton of instant ramen noodles.

Uncle Chul proudly showed us the merchandise and, from a glass display box, gave me a watch; my sister got a faux-pearl necklace. A customer peered in but waved her hand and scurried away. My mother said that we were disturbing the business, and after a rush of bows and goodbyes we were in the car, heading back to Westchester.

Uncle Chul had no choice but to be in that neighborhood, in that quarter-size store, with the risk of crime and no insurance. The trade-off was the low rent, and it soon became clear that he had made an excellent choice. With little competition on the block, the money started coming in, and soon he moved to a larger store nearby, and then moved again. His volume and cash flow surged, and after selling each successive business, he staked his profit on the next store.

We didn't see him much during this time, but when we did he made sure to show off his success to my parents. My aunt wore designer clothes, and Uncle Chul sported a fat gold Rolex. If we were out somewhere, he would casually pull out a rolled wad of \$100's when a check arrived, proclaiming affably to his brothers that it was his turn to pay.

But I noticed, too, that he and my aunt looked haggard and pressed. They spoke hurriedly and ate as quickly as they could. My mother would say something like, "You've developed such expensive tastes," and tell him that he was still frittering away his money on useless luxuries.

When Uncle Chul amassed the war chest he needed to open the wholesale business he had hoped for, he moved away from New York. He had heard of opportunities in Texas, where goods could be imported across the border and sold at big profits. Within a few years he had more than 50 people working for him, selling, by containers and truckloads, the same purses and belts he started with years before.

He bought a sprawling ranch house, brand-new and fitted with jet-action bathtubs and wide-screen televisions. He hired a team of Mexican maids to keep the place running. He traded in his Cadillacs for BMW's and sent his daughters to private school. One summer he paid my sister outrageous wages to sit in his air-conditioned office and practice her Spanish with the retailers. The business was on automatic pilot – effortless. Uncle Chul was now a millionaire several times over, richer than all his brothers combined.

I spent time with him again years later, when my mother became terminally ill. He visited regularly, always bearing gifts for the family. To me, he simply gave money. He knew I had quit my first job to become a writer, which meant little to him, except that I would be poor forever. Maybe, someday, my name would be famous, and he invested in that possibility, slipping me a couple of \$100's when my mother wasn't looking. He did this naturally, with an ease and power in his grip full of cash. His money was like a weight outside his body, which he could press upon others, like me. But in my mother's presence, his swagger vanished, and he was just Uncle Chul again, prodigal and bereft.

He was especially solemn on the day of her funeral. Of the many people who made their way to the cemetery and later to the house, I suspect Uncle Chul knew he was among those she would be most closely watching. My mother's friends had brought food and electric rice cookers and the men were in the living room, drinking companionably, speaking in low voices. My mother had been dying for nearly two years, and now that it was over waves of exhaustion and relief were washing over everyone in the house.

I remember Uncle Chul padding softly about the house, wary of disturbing even the layer of dust on her furniture. He was speaking in a soft register, his voice faltering, like a nervous young minister on his first encounter with the bereaved. He was nodding and bowing, even helping the ladies gather cups and plates, exercising until the last visitor left a younger brother's respect and obedience to the family and the dead.

In the Korean tradition, mourners brought offerings of money, all token amounts, except for Uncle Chul's fat envelope, which held thousands of dollars. He would have given more, he said, but his wholesale business wasn't doing so well anymore. I knew that wasn't the real reason. He must have known what my mother would have said, perhaps was telling him now – that he couldn't help but be the flashy one again.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. How would you define an "all-American success story"? In what ways is Uncle Chul's story like an all-American success story? Be specific.
2. How do the values embodied by Uncle Chul and the narrative of his success differ from those embodied and expressed by the writer's mother?
3. Does the writer endorse either his mother's values or Uncle Chul's? If so, why and how? If not, why do you think he refrains from making his own opinion known?

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What strategy does the writer use to begin this selection? To conclude it? (See “Guide to Terms”; Introductions; Closings.) Are both strategies effective? Why, or why not? (Guide: Evaluation.)
2. What ideas does the writer highlight or emphasize by his choice of opening and closing strategies? Where else in the essay do these ideas receive emphasis, and through what means? (Guide: Emphasis.)
3. Where and for what purposes does this essay employ comparison and contrast as an expository pattern? (See Chapter 5.) Why should we consider narration, not comparison and contrast, as the dominant expository pattern in the selection?

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Choose a paragraph describing one of the characters and explain how the terms the writer has chosen reflect the values of the character. (Guide: Diction.)
2. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following terms, look them up in a dictionary: decorous (Par. 1); taekwondo (3); niggling, accrual (6); tenuous (10).

READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Uncle Chul seems to believe he can get wealthy quickly. Working in a group, discuss what you consider to be the American dream. Did Uncle Chul leave Korea for an American dream? Did the dream exist in the form that he perceived? Draw on your notes of the group’s discussion to write an essay about a person you know or a particular experience that helps define that American dream.
2. Considering Audience: Many of the situations in Lee’s essay cross cultural boundaries. “Get rich quick” schemes and disagreements between family members are widespread. Identify situations that Lee presents that are relevant for most readers. Choose one that resonates as part of your life and narrate it in a short essay.
3. Developing an Essay: Create a narrative essay using selected scenes from over a considerable period of time. Choose the scenes so that they reflect differing outlooks or perspectives, and arrange them as Lee does for an expository purpose.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by NARRATION follow.)

Writing Suggestions for Chapter 11

NARRATION

Use narration as a primary or partial pattern (e.g., in developed examples or in comparison) for one of the following expository themes or another suggested by them. Avoid the isolated personal account that has little broader significance. Remember, too, that development of the essay should itself make your point, without excessive moralizing.

1. People can still succeed without a college education.
2. The frontiers are not all gone.
3. When people succeed in communicating, they can learn to get along with each other.
4. Even with “careful” use of capital punishment, innocent people can be executed.
5. Sports don’t always build character.
6. Physical danger can make us more aware of ourselves and our values.
7. Conditioning to the realities of the job is as important for police officers as it is in professional training.
8. It is possible for employees themselves to determine when they have reached their highest level of competence.
9. **Wartime massacres are not a new development.**
10. “Date rape” and sexual harassment on the job are devastating and generally unexpected.
11. Both heredity and environment shape personality.
12. Physical and mental handicaps can be overcome in some ways, but they are still a burden.
13. Toxic wastes pose a problem for many communities.
14. Hunting is a worthwhile and challenging sport.
15. Lack of money places considerable stress on a family or a marriage.
16. Exercise can become an obsession.
17. People who grow up in affluent surroundings don’t understand what it is like to worry about money, to be hungry, or to live in a dangerous neighborhood.
18. Some jobs are simply degrading, either because of the work or because of the fellow workers.

COLLABORATIVE EXERCISES

1. Consider item 6 from the list of writing suggestions. Have each member of a group relate a story of physical danger and self-awareness that affected the group member or a friend. Each group member can then combine the examples into a unified paper narrating the effects that physical dangers may have upon people. When the papers are completed, group members can compare them and discuss the different choices the writers made.
2. Item 9 from the list of writing suggestions addresses analyzing wartime massacres. Have each member of your group choose some wartime atrocity (e.g., from the Gulf War, the Holocaust, or the like). Group members can then choose from these examples to create unified narratives.

#

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Introduces narrative and its relation to writer’s main point

Narrative

Choosing a Strategy #

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Developing a Narrative #

Opening incident—starts in the middle of events

Unusual, exotic—gets readers' attention

Appeals to senses

Uses quotation

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Fills in background of events

Uses key word to set off flashbacks

Introduces his values

Flashbacks—source of values

Back to main narrative

Dream event

Developing a Narrative #

Explains values; love of ivory helps readers understand appeal of art that may be unfamiliar to them

Brief transition paragraph

Back to main narrative

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Experience of seeing elephants more dramatic and moving than their representations in ivory

Developing a Narrative #

Concrete details appeal to senses throughout narrative

Dialogue

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Link to dream sequence—effect on his values

Dramatic climax of narrative

Reference to dream sequence and to underlying discussion of values

Warning symbolic of writer's changed perspectives

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Discussion of changed values—summarizes main ideas of essay

Gansberg / 38 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Gansberg / 38 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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31

Gansberg / 38 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police #

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Canada / Pain #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Canada / Pain #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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18

19

Canada / Pain #

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Makihara / Making the Grade #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Makihara / Making the Grade #

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12

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Issues and Ideas #

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Orwell / A Hanging #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Orwell / A Hanging #

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Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

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Orwell / A Hanging #

Chapter 11 / Using Narration as an Expository Technique

Worcester / Arms and the Man #

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Writing Suggestions #

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