Narrative

Social purpose

Narratives entertain and instruct through dealing with unusual and unexpected development of events. They often convey messages about how people are expected to behave. There is a range of story types related to narrative, including:

- moral tales and fables narratives including an explicit moral point of view in the coda
- anecdotes are stories used to share feelings about unresolved complicating events (orientation – remarkable event – reaction)
- exemplums are stories used to judge someone's character or behaviour (orientation – incident – interpretation).

Structure

- Orientation – describes a setting in time and place; introduces the main characters or narrator; orients the reader to what is to follow.
- Complication – a sequence of events that may begin in a usual fashion but then change to include events that are unusual or problematic; characters may express their reaction to or evaluation of these events.
- Resolution – deals with the attempts to solve or overcome the problem.
- Coda – optional stage giving an overall evaluation of the events; may state how the character/s have changed or what has been learned.

Note: The structure of a narrative is not *fixed*. However, students need to become familiar with this 'prototypical' description before they can begin to explore how these stages can be manipulated for rhetorical effect and how to position the reader (eg no orientation, a series of complications before any resolution, partial or unsatisfactory resolutions, shunting between events in past and present etc.).

Key grammatical features	
Language for expressing ideas	• relating processes (verb groups) to define and describe • action processes (verb groups) to describe activities and behaviours; characters often use saying and thinking verbs (ie direct or indirect speech/thought) • verb groups usually in past tense • particular concrete participants • detailed noun groups to describe features or characteristics, incorporating a range of adjectivals • circumstances expressed as adverbials to express details (eg place, time, manner, accompaniment)
Language for connecting ideas	• simple, compound and complex sentences to give information
Language for interaction	• affect, judgement and appreciation vocabulary to evaluate phenomena • grading resources to intensify descriptions and actions • figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, atypical word combinations, 'invented' words
Language for creating cohesive texts	• varied themes, including marked themes (adverbials and dependent clauses) to set and reset events in time and place • lexical cohesion achieved largely by synonyms, antonyms, collocation

Text 15	Narrative
Katie's Show and Tell *Harriet (age 8)*	
Orientation	One day Kate found a spider in her back yard and decided to take it in for Show and Tell. She loved spiders and knew which ones were dangerous.
Complication	When it was her turn to do show and tell, Kate got up excitedly and opened the box to show everybody the spider. Suddenly the spider jumped out the box onto the floor. Everybody in the class started to scream and run around the room madly. Kate thought they were stupid. It was only a spider. She got down and frantically started to look for it but everybody was in the way.
Embedded evaluation	'What if they trod on it?' she thought angrily.
Resolution	Finally the teacher got mad and yelled at the kids to stay still. Then Kate was able to find the poor thing under the teacher's desk. It was shivering with fright but still alive.
Coda	Kate decided not to bring anything interesting to school anymore.