

Narrative Writing with Pacing, Dialogue, and Description

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Strong Grade 5 narratives (1) hook the reader and set the scene, (2) develop characters through DIALOGUE and ACTION, (3) use SENSORY DESCRIPTION (sight, sound, smell, touch), (4) control PACING (slow down at important moments, speed up between them), and (5) end with a conclusion that follows from what came before.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Student draft - The Last Inning

The bases were loaded, and Maya stepped up to the plate. The metal bat felt heavier than usual in her hands. Behind her, the dugout was so quiet she could hear the buzz of the field lights. Coach Patel was watching, his arms folded across his clipboard.

Just breathe, Maya whispered to herself. The pitcher rocked back and let go. The first pitch came in low - ball one. Maya didn't move. The second pitch was a strike right down the middle, and the umpire's voice cracked the silence. Strike one.

Maya tightened her grip. She thought about every practice swing, every time her dad had thrown to her in the driveway after dinner. The third pitch hung in the air like it was waiting for her. She swung. The bat met the ball with a deep, hollow thunk, and for one long second, no one in the stands moved.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the student draft below to answer the items.

1. Which sentence from the draft uses PACING to SLOW DOWN an important moment?
 - A. The third pitch hung in the air like it was waiting for her.
 - B. The first pitch came in low - ball one.
 - C. Coach Patel was watching, his arms folded across his clipboard.
 - D. Just breathe, Maya whispered to herself.



2. Which sentence uses SENSORY DESCRIPTION (sound) to build tension?
 - A. Maya tightened her grip.
 - B. Behind her, the dugout was so quiet she could hear the buzz of the field lights.
 - C. Coach Patel was watching, his arms folded across his clipboard.
 - D. The bases were loaded, and Maya stepped up to the plate.
3. Read this sentence: *The bat met the ball with a deep, hollow thunk.* Why is *thunk* a STRONG word choice?
 - A. It is a fancy word that only adults usually know.
 - B. It is a word that makes the sentence longer.
 - C. It is a word that means hit but with no extra meaning.
 - D. It is a sound word that lets the reader actually HEAR the contact.
4. Which DIALOGUE addition would best develop Coach Patel's character at the end of paragraph 1?
 - A. Hey, do whatever, Coach Patel said.
 - B. This is the most important moment ever in the entire history of softball, Coach Patel shouted.
 - C. Eyes on the ball, Maya - wait for your pitch, Coach Patel said quietly.
 - D. I don't really care what happens next, Coach Patel said, looking away.
5. Which transition would BEST start a NEW paragraph that comes right after paragraph 3?
 - A. Meanwhile,
 - B. Then, the ball dropped.
 - C. On the other hand,
 - D. In summary,
6. The writer wants to SPEED UP the action between paragraph 2 and paragraph 3. Which sentence does that BEST?
 - A. Two more pitches whipped past - one outside, one fouled straight back into the screen.
 - B. A long pause settled over the field, and Maya let her thoughts wander to many different things.
 - C. Maya carefully described what she saw, what she felt, and what she remembered, in slow detail.
 - D. Coach Patel stood up, sat down, stood up again, and then thought about what to say.
7. Which ENDING would BEST follow from the draft as written?
 - A. Maya woke up. It had all been a dream, and there was no game at all.
 - B. Suddenly a UFO landed on the pitcher's mound and beamed everyone up to outer space.
 - C. Maya decided softball was boring and quit the team the next morning to take up painting.
 - D. The crack faded into a roar from the bleachers - the ball was over the fence, and Maya's teammates were already pouring out of the dugout.



8. Which sentence shows EMOTION through ACTION (not by simply naming the feeling)?
- A. Maya was very nervous and afraid about the pitch.
 - B. Maya felt scared in her heart about the next pitch.
 - C. Maya tightened her grip until her knuckles turned white.
 - D. Maya was anxious, worried, and afraid all at the same time.
9. Write ONE sentence that uses SENSORY DESCRIPTION (sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch) to set the scene for a story moment of your choice.

10. Write a 1-2 sentence ENDING that FOLLOWS FROM your sensory scene above. Do NOT use 'It was all a dream.'



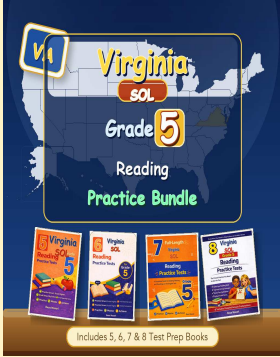
Answer Keys

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Explanations	
1. A	A stretches a single instant (the pitch traveling through the air) into one slow image - that is pacing slowed at the climax. B reports a quick action. C is a setting detail. D is dialogue.
2. B	B places the reader inside the moment by naming a SOUND (the buzz of the field lights) that only matters because everything else is silent. A is action. C is sight only. D is a setup fact.
3. D	<i>Thunk</i> is onomatopoeia - it imitates a sound, putting the reader at the plate. A is not the reason it works. B is irrelevant. C is wrong: <i>thunk</i> carries a specific texture (deep, hollow) a plain verb like <i>hit</i> does not.
4. C	C fits the calm, focused coach the draft sets up: short coaching advice, said <i>quietly</i> . A makes him careless. B exaggerates. D contradicts the watching, attentive image already built.
5. B	Narrative continues in TIME order, so a time transition like <i>Then</i> fits. <i>Meanwhile</i> jumps to a different place at the same time (no other place is set up). <i>On the other hand</i> signals contrast. <i>In summary</i> belongs in informative writing.
6. A	A compresses two pitches into one fast sentence - that is pacing sped up. B and C slow the pace. D adds slow, repetitive movement that does nothing to advance the story.
7. D	A satisfying narrative ending FOLLOWS FROM what came before. D pays off the swing, the silence, and the buildup. A (it was a dream) cancels the story. B is unrelated fantasy. C contradicts the focused, hopeful character.
8. C	C SHOWS the feeling through a body-action detail (knuckles turning white) - show, don't tell. A, B, and D all simply name the feeling with adjectives, which is telling.
9.	Answer: Examples: (1) The empty hallway smelled like old crayons and floor wax, and somewhere a clock kept ticking. (2) Cold rain tapped the classroom windows in fast, uneven beats. (3) The popcorn at the school carnival was buttery enough to leave a shine on my fingers. Accept any single sentence that names AT LEAST ONE SPECIFIC sense detail (sound, smell, touch, taste, or specific sight). NOT acceptable: a sentence that only names a feeling (I felt nervous) or a generic sight (It was a nice day).
10.	Answer: Example for the rain scene above: The bell finally rang at 3:05, and I pulled my hood up before stepping out into the cold gray afternoon. // Example for the carnival: I wiped my hand on my jeans and got in line for the next ride, the smell of popcorn following me the whole way. Accept any 1-2 sentence ending that LOGICALLY FOLLOWS from the scene the student set up. NOT acceptable: 'It was all a dream,' a UFO/sudden-fantasy twist not set up earlier, or an ending that contradicts the mood of the scene.



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