

What is narration?

Narration is a technique which at its simplest means "telling back." Though in its fullest educational benefit there is more happening than simply comprehension.

If you read or see something – you remember 15%

If you hear something – you remember 20%

If you see and hear something – you remember 30-40%

If you tell it to someone – you remember 80-90%

Developmental stages with narrations:

- Initially children will just give you the facts – just as they heard it.
- Then they will start to make connections – as they give you a narration on the fresh information they have just heard/read they will add to it background information that they have gleaned from elsewhere, at a previous time.
- They will start to make opinions, express opinions and support their opinions while giving you the information.
- Then they will be able to see analogies (hidden meanings, wisdom connections) and draw life lessons from what they are reading.

When do we narrate?

We find that the children are telling us things that they have discovered from really young - we just encouraged this to continue. When they tell us about what they saw, what they did, what they heard they are beginning the skills of narrations. They will still be sorting out sequence of events, they may not start with a topic sentence so it takes a while to know what they are talking about, they may give you all the unimportant information first - this is a learning curve - the more they talk the more these things get sorted out.

When you read a book to your children, ask them to tell you the story, ask them to tell you what they have learned, or what they heard. Once again at the beginning, the order of their retelling may be all over the place, but they are learning and you will see change as they grow older.

You can get your children to narrate

- When they read a book
- When they see a movie
- When they watch a documentary
- When they visit a museum or art gallery
- When they spend the day with friends
- When they learn a new skill

What are the benefits of narration?

So much of our focus is on writing that we forget to look at the foundation of writing. We believe it is more important to have something to say than it is to write it properly. We want our children to be thinkers and to be able to communicate that thinking to others.

Most presume that that means students need good writing skills, and they do, but writing is putting our thoughts on paper - so first they need to be able to have the thoughts. We find that talking through issues, being widely read, and being encouraged to ask questions, and answer other people's questions, will give our children something of substance to write when it comes time to communicate in the written form.

It is much easier for a child to answer a few questions about a passage that was just read to them, than it is to provide a narration. Narration takes a much higher degree of comprehension and thought. It is oral composition. Narration has to be learned by practicing, as with any new skill, but the benefits will astound you!

Narration Helps

- Tell five things you learned from what you read.
- Tell back the story in your own words.
- Describe your favorite scene from the reading.
- Write three test questions about the reading.
- Tell something new you learned from the reading.
- Tell what may happen next.
- Describe the problem and tell how you would have solved it.
- Tell how you might have done things differently as a character.
- Compare how people lived then to how we live today.
- Describe any clues left by the author that may have foretold the plot of the reading.
- Compare a character from this book with a character from another book.
- Compare yourself to a character from this book.