

Performance Task: Stories for the Future: Narrative Writing

Description:

Create a narrative that looks forward, showing how memory and identity help people find their way. Your story may be true, fictional, or blended, but it must reveal how remembering the past shapes what comes next.

- **OPTIONAL:** You may tell your story through words alone or combine media — such as illustration, image, sound, or video to deepen your audience’s understanding.
- **OPTIONAL:** Once complete, you’ll share your story with an audience beyond our classroom — through a digital anthology, reading invitational, or story podcast so others can see how young people imagine the future.

Choose one of these pathways for your narrative writing:

1. Speculative Story (Fictional Future)

- Imagine a future world where something essential to humanity — stories, emotions, art, or nature — has been lost. Write about a character or community that tries to restore it.

2. Narrative of Becoming (True or Blended Memoir)

- Write a true story — or a mix of truth and creative retelling — about a moment when you realized who you were becoming. Show what you learned, how you changed, and what you want to carry forward into the future and the wider world.

3. Reimagined Cuento or Myth (Cultural Continuity)

- Retell a cultural, family, or community story in a way that speaks to today’s or tomorrow’s world. You can keep its structure but change the setting, values, or message to show how stories evolve to fit new times.

4. Continuation or Companion Story (Novel Continuation)

- Write a new story set in *The Last Cuentista’s* world. You might narrate from another point of view (Voxy, Feathers, Suma), imagine the next generation, or show how new stories are born on Sagan.

Why This Task Matters:

This final narrative brings together everything you’ve learned this year about stories—how people shape them, use them to communicate shared histories, and reimagine the world around them. Across our units, we’ve seen that stories do more than entertain: they preserve cultural and historical memory, carry knowledge and identity across generations, and illuminate the connections between human beings and the natural systems they depend on. Stories can also serve as guides for survival, helping individuals and communities make sense of the past and imagine what comes next.

Criteria for Success:

- The narrative engages and orients the reader by establishing a clear context, point of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- The narrative unfolds in a logical, well-paced sequence using effective transitions to show shifts in time, setting, and relationships between events.
- The narrative uses effective techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- The narrative uses precise words, vivid descriptions, and sensory details to clearly convey experiences and bring the story to life.
- The narrative communicates a clear message, theme, or insight and includes a conclusion and/or reflection that shows the significance of the experience.
- The writing demonstrates command of standard English conventions, including correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation (such as commas, dashes, or ellipses), and purposeful use of verb forms (active/passive, conditional, subjunctive).

Performance Task Rubric: Memory, Identity & Narrative

Grade 8 | W.8.3.a–e, W.8.4, L.8.2.a, L.8.2.c, L.8.3.a

Use this rubric to check your work before you submit. Ask yourself: Does my narrative meet the Proficient description in every row?

Criteria	1 — Beginning	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient
Narrative Orientation & Point of View W.8.3.a	Does not establish a clear context, point of view, or narrator. The opening does not orient the reader to the story's setting, characters, or situation.	Attempts to establish context and a narrator or character, but the point of view is unclear or inconsistent. The reader may be partially oriented but key details about setting or situation are missing.	Clearly establishes context, a consistent point of view, and introduces a narrator and/or characters. The opening orients the reader to the setting and situation, inviting engagement with the story.
Sequence, Pacing & Transitions W.8.3.c	Events are presented randomly or without logical order. Transitions are absent or do not show shifts in time, setting, or relationships between events.	Events follow a mostly logical sequence, but pacing is uneven or rushed in places. Some transitions are present but may not clearly signal shifts in time, setting, or relationships.	The narrative unfolds in a logical, well-paced sequence. Effective transitions clearly show shifts in time, setting, and the relationships between events, moving the story forward smoothly.
Narrative Techniques W.8.3.b	Little to no use of narrative techniques. Dialogue, pacing, description, or reflection are absent or used ineffectively, leaving experiences and characters undeveloped.	Uses some narrative techniques (such as dialogue or description), but their application is inconsistent. Characters or experiences are partially developed but may lack depth or feel underdeveloped in places.	Uses narrative techniques — including dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection — effectively to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. The techniques deepen the reader's understanding of the story.
Word Choice & Sensory Detail W.8.3.d	Word choice is vague or repetitive. Sensory details and descriptive language are missing or do not contribute to a clear picture of the story's experiences or world.	Uses some precise words and descriptive language, but sensory details are limited or unevenly applied. The story's world and experiences are partially conveyed but may feel flat in places.	Uses precise words, vivid descriptions, and sensory details that clearly convey experiences and bring the story to life. The language choices create a rich, immersive picture for the reader.

Criteria	1 — Beginning	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient
Theme, Message & Conclusion W.8.3.e	No clear theme, message, or insight is communicated. The narrative lacks a conclusion or the ending does not connect to the story's significance.	A theme or message is present but not fully developed or clearly communicated. The conclusion exists but may feel abrupt, underdeveloped, or only partially connected to the story's significance.	Communicates a clear theme, message, or insight about how memory and identity shape the future. Includes a conclusion and/or reflection that thoughtfully shows the significance of the experience.
Task, Purpose & Audience W.8.4	The narrative does not address the task or chosen pathway. The writing does not demonstrate awareness of audience or purpose.	The narrative partially addresses the task and chosen pathway, but purpose or audience awareness is inconsistent. The writing engages the reader in some places but loses focus in others.	The narrative clearly addresses the chosen pathway and fulfills the task: showing how memory and identity help people find their way. The writing demonstrates consistent awareness of purpose and audience.
Punctuation & Capitalization L.8.2.a, L.8.2.c	Contains frequent errors in punctuation (including commas, dashes, ellipses) and/or capitalization that disrupt readability and meaning.	Punctuation and capitalization are mostly correct, but errors are noticeable and may occasionally disrupt meaning or flow.	Demonstrates consistent command of punctuation — including commas, dashes, and ellipses — and capitalization. Errors are rare and do not disrupt readability.
Verb Forms & Style L.8.3.a	Verb forms (active/passive, conditional, subjunctive) are used incorrectly or inconsistently, causing confusion in meaning or tone.	Verb forms are mostly used correctly, but some errors in active/passive voice, conditional, or subjunctive mood are present and may affect clarity or style in places.	Demonstrates purposeful and correct use of verb forms, including active and passive voice, conditional, and subjunctive mood. Verb choices support the tone, clarity, and style of the narrative.