

Sample Freewrite and Outline for a Narrative Essay

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Part 1

1. What specific event do you want to write about that had a lasting impact on your life?

I want to write about the first article I had published.

2. In one sentence, describe the event.

It was a dream come true, but the criticism I received taught me there was more to being a writer than I thought.

3. When and where did it happen.

I wrote the article at my home in St. Joseph, MO, in November 1984. It was not published until February 1986.

4. What people were involved in the situation?

The editors of The Comics Buyers Guide, myself, and a few professional writers who responded to the article.

5. What people are your audience?

Young writers, especially those who get easily discouraged.

6. What message do you want to convey to your audience?

Don't give up, but accept criticism as a tool for growth. If you want to be a writer, you must develop a thick skin when it comes to feedback.

Freewrite

Getting published at 21. Wrote article for Comics Buyers Guide. A lot of new publishers in comics industry—idependents, alternatives to Marvel and DC. Tried some of the these comics, didn't like them, too expensive, but wanted more than just two publishers. Wrote article, "How to Improve the Alternate Comics' Success" and submitted it. Accepted! Yay! Thought I was on my way to an illustrious career of writing comics. But the article was not published until more than a year later. Reaction from pro writers not good. One said I wanted to alternate comics to succeed only in relation to Marvel and DC. Another called my article "ignorant and pointless." Editorial comment said they published my article because it reflected an attitude all too common in fans: narrow and self-serving. So, they didn't think my article was brilliant. Learned valuable lessons: I truly didn't know what I was talking about. Growing up reading Marvel and DC, they were center of my comics universe. Learned there was a much larger reality and interest in comics besides super-heroes. But also felt great that real comics pros read and responded to my work. Contributed to the public conversation.

Outline

I. Introduction and main idea: At 21, I got my first article accepted for publication and thought I was on my way to a brilliant career of writing comic books. What I learned was not what I expected.

II. Background information: "Alternate" comics challenged Marvel and DC's dominance of comics industry.

A. I read some of these new comics and didn't like them.

B. At the same time, I wanted diversity in the comics industry.

III. I wrote and submitted an article entitled “How to Improve the Alternate Comics’ Success.”

A. My central point was that alternate comics needed to be cheaper and to more closely match the successful super-heroes of Marvel and DC to appeal to me.

B. I said the alternates needed “to put more honey before our noses” to get fans interested.

IV. Reaction from comics pros was not what I expected.

A. One accused me of wanting the alternates to succeed only in terms of Marvel and DC, rather than appreciating them on their own merits.

B. Another explained the economics of why alternate publishers couldn’t compete with Marvel and DC in terms of price.

C. Another called my article “ignorant and pointless.”

D. The editors admitted that they printed my article only because it reflected common attitudes among fans.

V. Conclusion: Though painful at the time, the experience made me a stronger writer.

A. I learned to see things outside my own limited world view.

B. I learned that criticism of my writing didn’t kill me; it showed me areas to improve.

C. It was a thrill when professional comics writers read and responded to my work!