

Six Ways to Start a Narrative

Directions: The examples below show different ways to start narratives. The examples in the left column are beginnings for a nonfiction narrative. The examples in the right column are beginnings for an imaginative narrative. When you write a narrative, experiment with different methods and then choose the best one.

	Nonfiction Narrative	your example:
1. Where	On the banks of the Delaware, General Washington saw the ice that threatened to slow the crossing of his 2,400 men.	
2. When	At 4:00 p.m. on Dec. 25, 1776, Washington unleashed his plan to surprise the Hessians at Trenton; the weather would delay his surprise by nearly four hours.	
3. Action Verb	The patriot soldiers struggled to cross the Delaware. They fought to load heavy artillery, navigate their boats in the darkness, and avoid the great blocks of ice.	
4. Introduce a Character	General Washington despaired of surprising his enemy after the long and slow crossing of the Delaware, but he pressed on, knowing a victory was needed to uplift his compatriots and their cause.	
5. Interesting Comment	On the banks of a freezing river, in darkness and against odds, one great leader of our country took a gamble—and it paid off.	
6. Dialogue	In a letter to the Continental Congress, George Washington praised his men, who had to “march thro’ a violent Storm of Snow and Hail” after a difficult river crossing. Their ardor and persistence impressed him.	