


# Student Portrait Sheet

Session 1. Writing Workshop – TJ Prep (8<sup>th</sup>)



**Young  
Scholars  
Circle**

# Agenda

- 
- TJ Mission Statement
  - Portraits of a Graduate
  - Exceptional vs. Typical Activities
  - Reflective Writing Process

# What are some of the characteristics of an ideal TJ student?



# TJ Mission Statement

The mission of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology is to provide students a challenging learning environment focused on math, science, and technology, to inspire joy at the prospect of discovery, and to foster a culture of innovation based on ethical behavior and the shared interests of humanity.

# Let's process it!

Based on the Mission Statements, what are some of the characteristics of the applicants that the Admissions Committee is looking for?



# PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



**collaborator**

**goal directed & resilient**

**communicator**

**innovator**

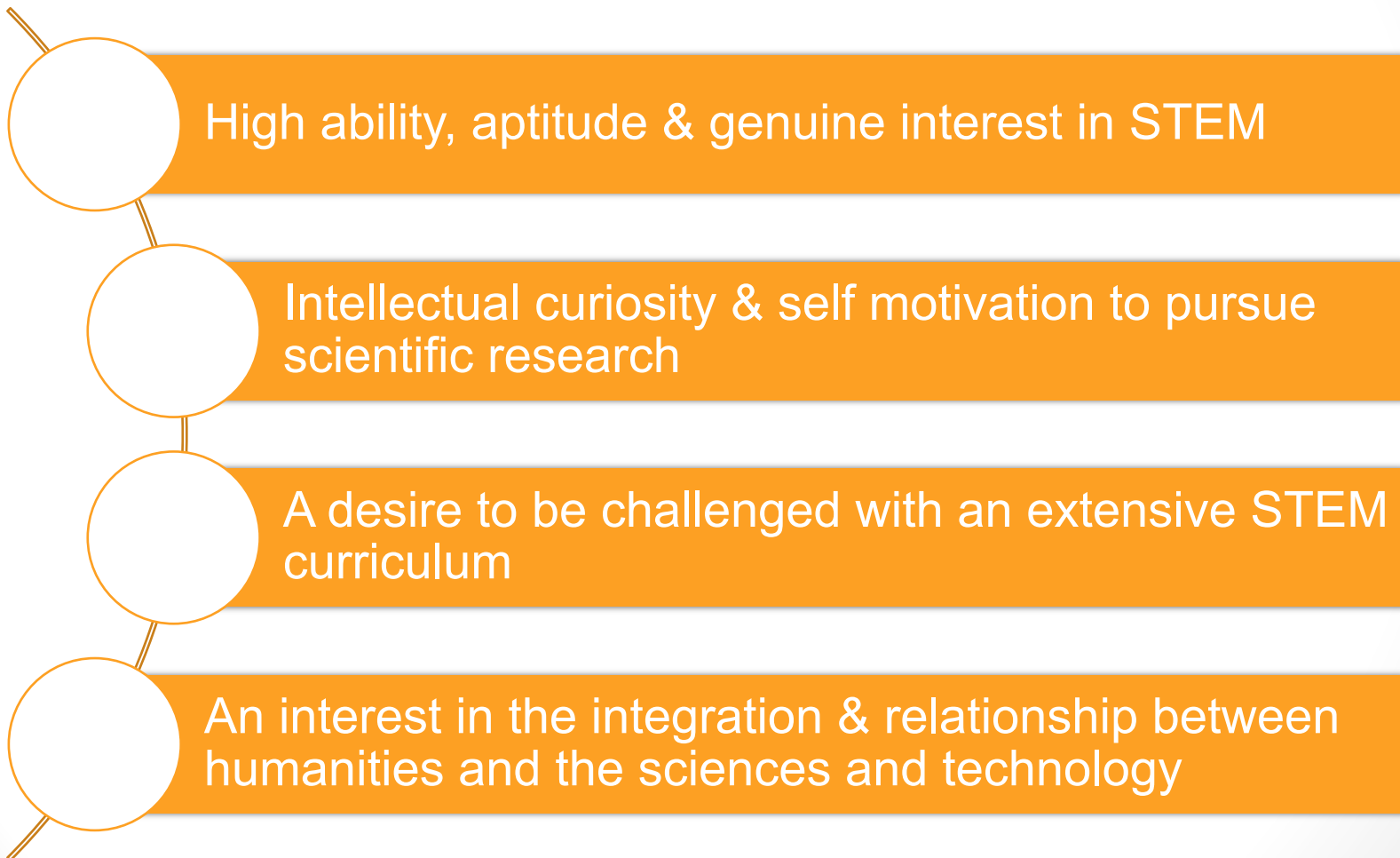
**creative & critical thinker**

**leader**

**ethical & global citizen**

**problem solver**

# Highly motivated students with exceptional quantitative skills who demonstrate:

- 
- High ability, aptitude & genuine interest in STEM
  - Intellectual curiosity & self motivation to pursue scientific research
  - A desire to be challenged with an extensive STEM curriculum
  - An interest in the integration & relationship between humanities and the sciences and technology

# Highly motivated students with exceptional quantitative skills who demonstrate:

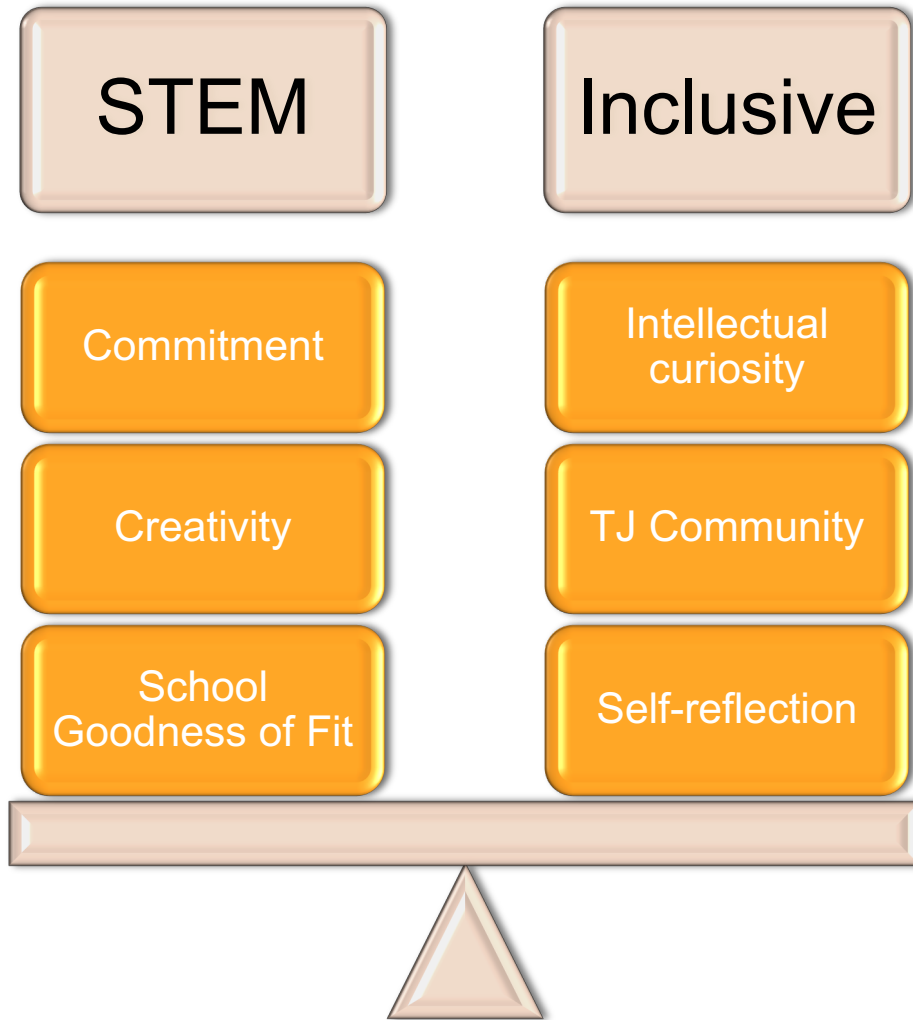




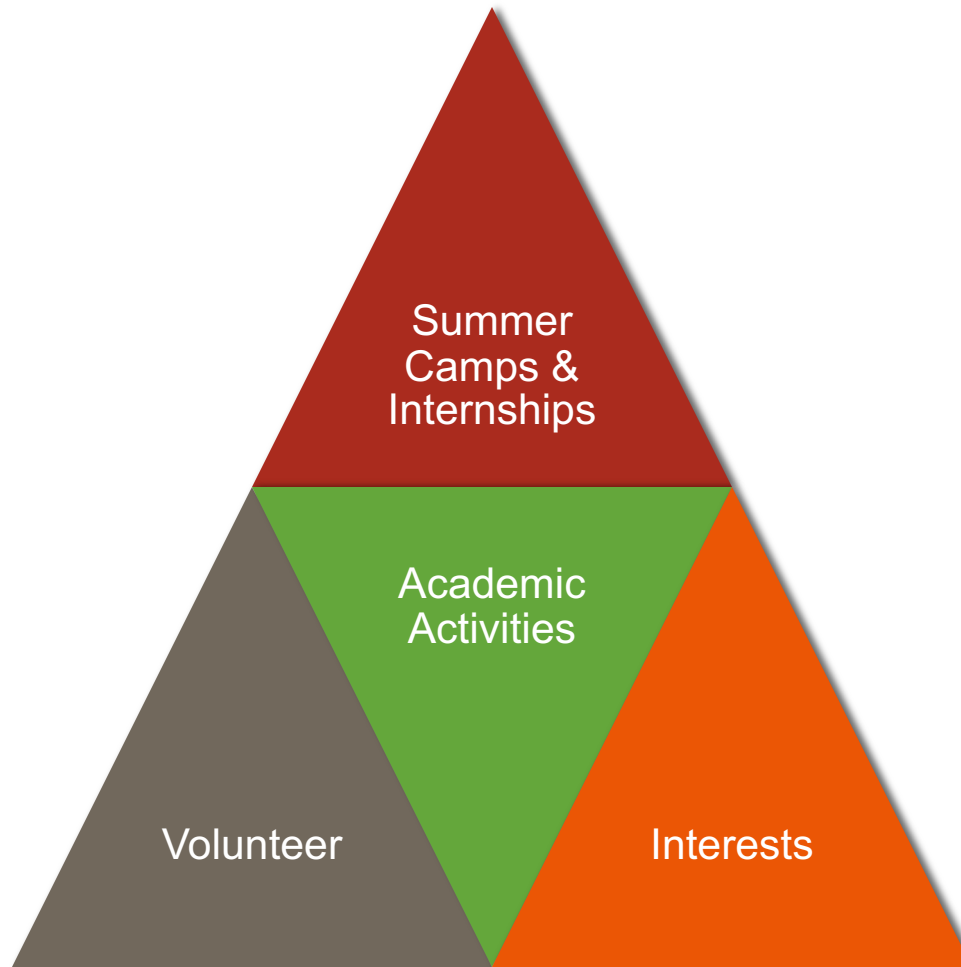
# Rating Categories

What's hot and what's not?

# TJ Assessment Rubric



# Possible SPS Contents



# Overall - Typical

A rating of “**Typical**” represents a student whose contributions are judged by the committee members as average or typical for the pool of semifinalists. Many students are good candidates for TJHSST but should still earn a rating of “Typical” because the potential contribution to TJ’s community of learners (if any is articulated) is considered to be similar to that of many other semifinalists based on the information in the narrative.

# Overall - Exceptional

A rating of “**Exceptional**” represents a student whose contributions are judged by the Team member to be clearly outstanding and should be given only to students where there is **clear information** demonstrating that the student is high achieving, committed to STEM studies and an **exceptional student** who stands apart (from the average or typical student in the pool of semifinalists) in the expected contribution the student could make to the TJ community of learners.

# It's Your Turn!

- List down all your STEM extracurricular activities from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Clubs
- Accomplishments
- Hobbies
- Interests

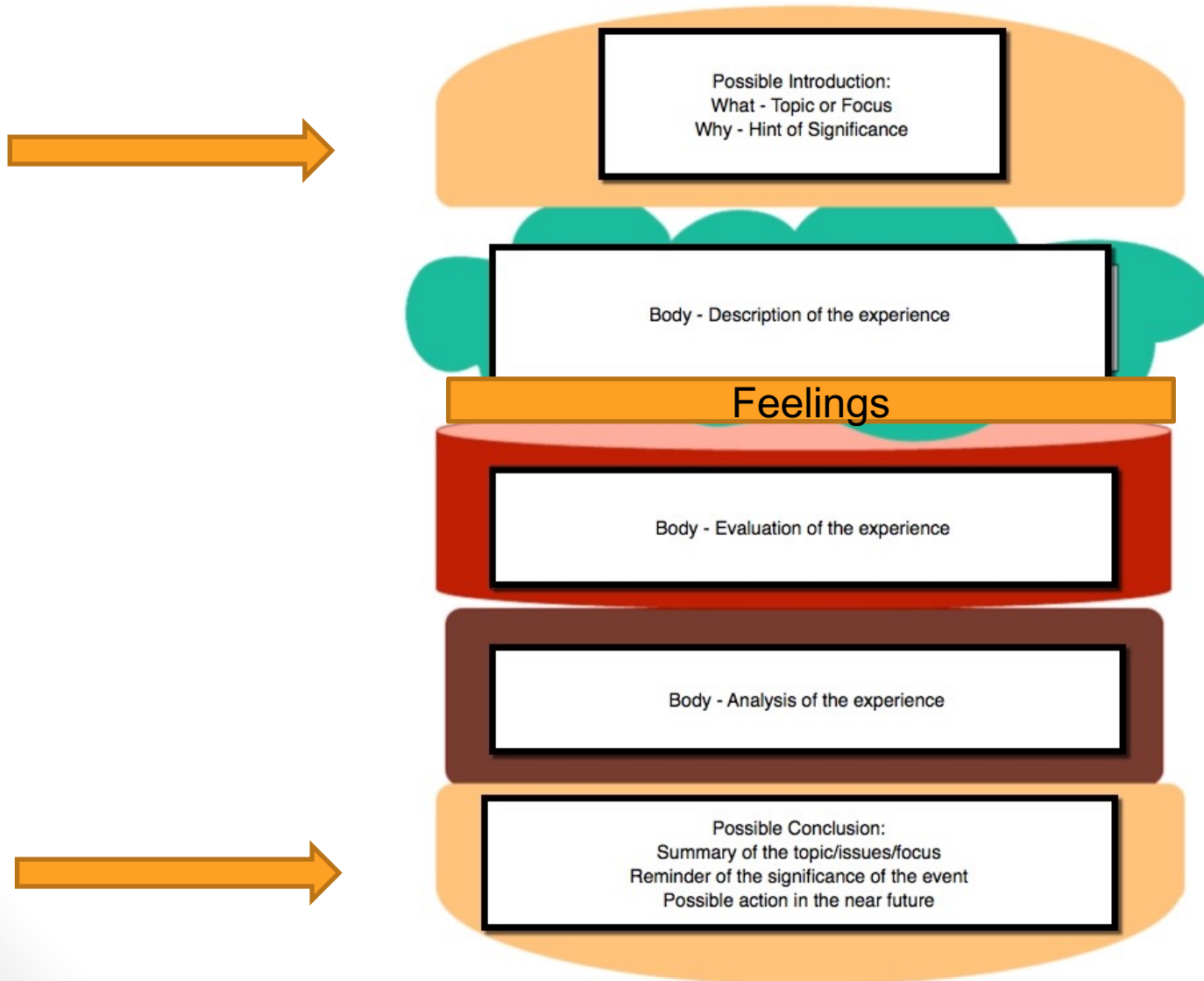
Choose 3 to 4 activities from your resume that you want to highlight in your SIS that might be exceptional.

# Think about it...

What are some ways to organize your reflective writing? How can you relay your message effectively to your audience?

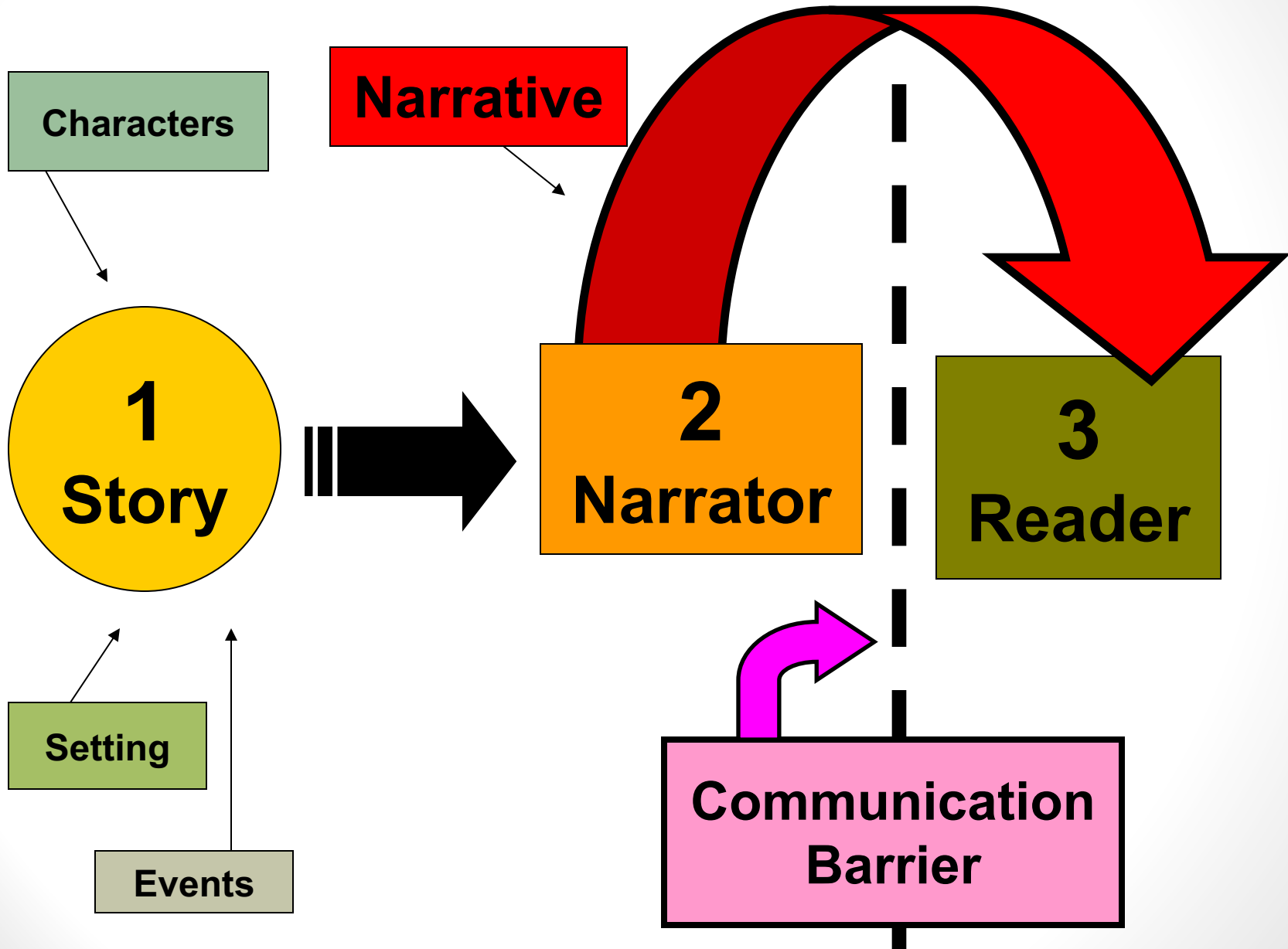


# Possible Structure





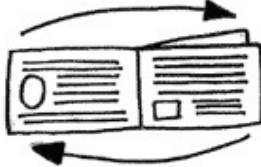






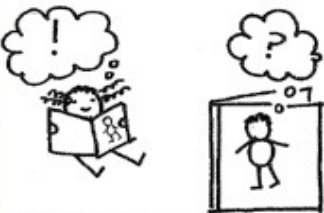




# Role of the Narrative Writer



# Narrative Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As...

<p>Provide the context/background information</p> 	<p>Introduce the characters</p> 	<p>Show the character's motivation</p> 
<p>Stir empathy</p> 	<p>Create the setting</p> 	<p>Build a mood</p> 
<p>Set up the problem</p> 	<p>Raise the stakes</p> 	<p>Build suspense</p> 
<p>Get readers predicting</p> 	<p>Support the theme</p> 	<p>Show the resolution</p> 

# Narrative Writers Use Techniques Such As...

<p>Flashback &amp; flashforward</p> 	<p>Multiple plot lines</p> 	<p>Inner thinking</p> 
<p>Dialogue</p> 	<p>Revealing actions</p> 	<p>Multiple points of view</p> 
<p>1<sup>st</sup> person narrator</p> 	<p>Reader knows MORE than the character</p> 	<p>Description</p> 
<p>Metaphor</p> 	<p>Tone</p> 	<p>Symbolism</p> 

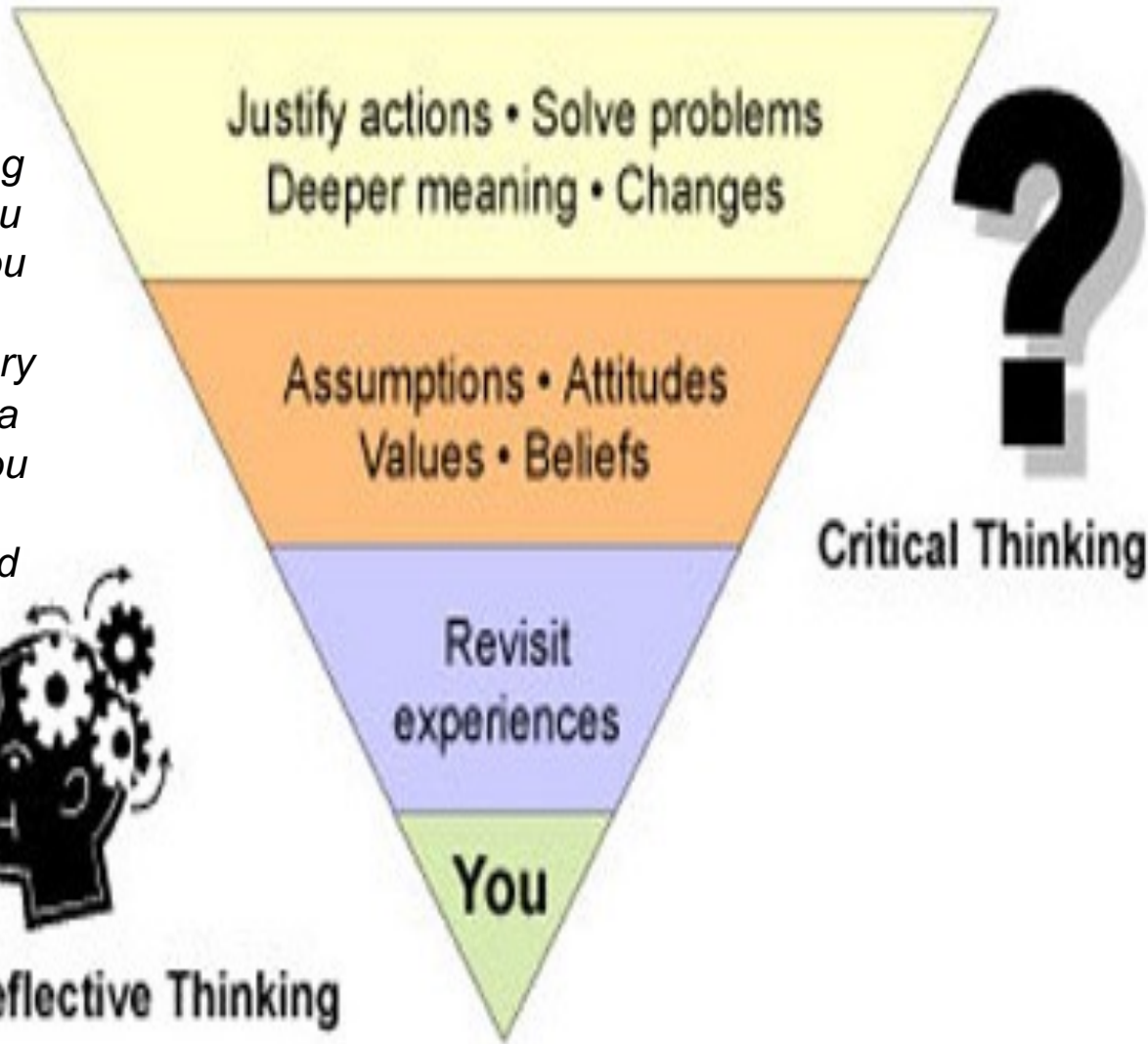
# REFLECTIVE WRITING

The Heart of the Essay

*Reflective thinking demands that you recognize that you bring valuable knowledge to every experience. It is a way of helping you to become an active, aware and critical learner.*



**Reflective Thinking**



## **Reflective Thinking Process**

**Figure 1 The Thinking Process adapted from Mezirow 1990, Schon 1987, Brookfield 1987)**

# 1

## Reflection before, during and after a learning process (Schön, 1983)

Before an experience	During an experience	After an experience
What do you think might happen?	What's happening now, as you make rapid decisions?	What are your insights immediately after, and/or later when you have more emotional distance from the event?
What might be the challenges?	Is it working out as I expected?	In retrospect how did it go?
What do I need to know or do in order to be best prepared for these experiences?	Am I dealing with the challenges well?	What did I particularly value and why?
	Is there anything I should do, say or think to make the experience successful?	Is there anything I would do differently before or during a similar event?
	What am I learning from this?	What have I learnt? <b>learned</b>

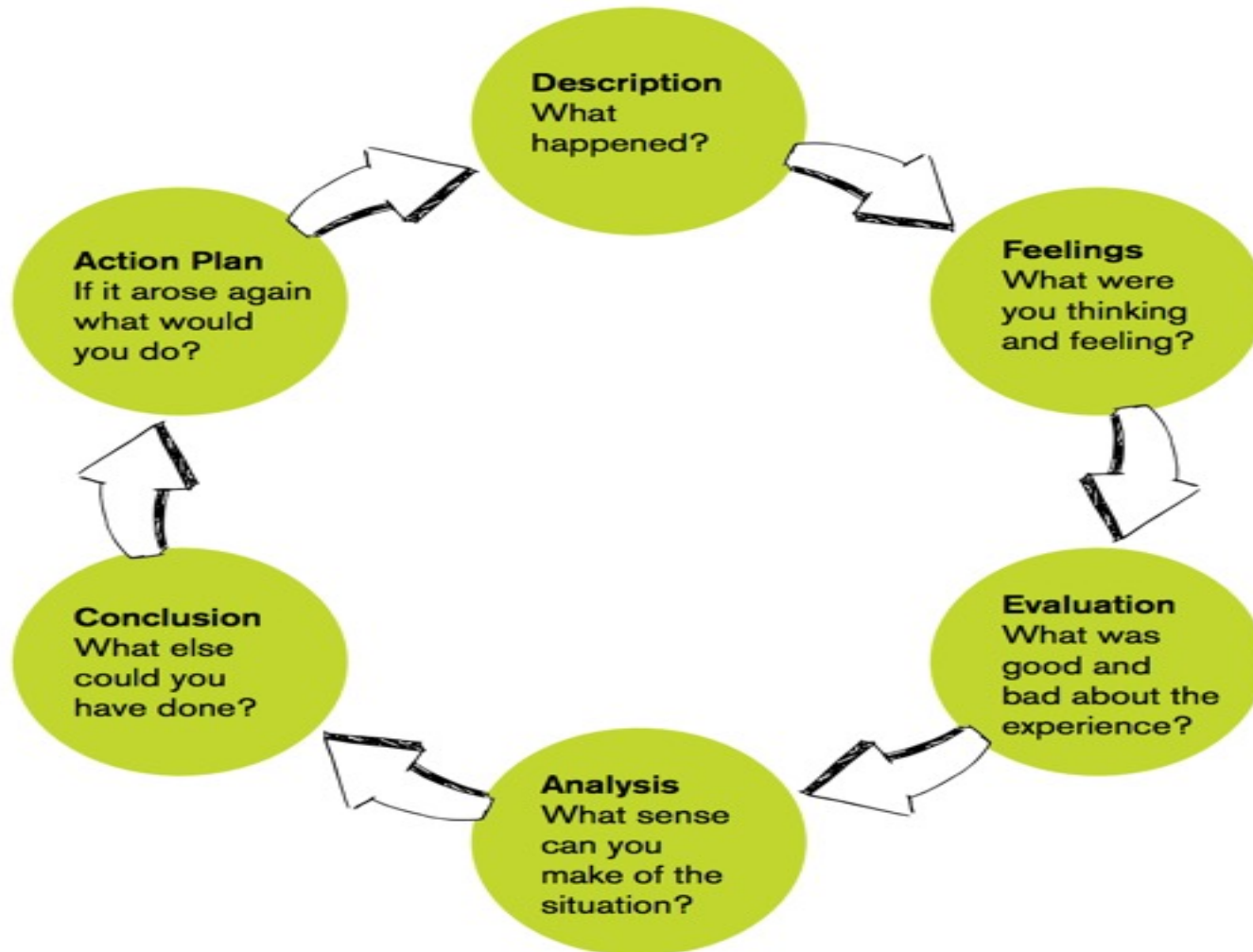
## Models of Reflection

Some frameworks you can use to aid your reflective process. These are frameworks, not templates.

## 2

### Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Graham Gibbs (1988) created a reflective learning cycle, including the role of feelings:



## Models of Reflection

Some frameworks you can use to aid your reflective process. These are frameworks, not templates.

# Deconstruct this essay

## Read Like a Reader

1. Describe the author.
2. Evaluate using the MS & the TJ Rating Categories

## Read Like a Writer

1. Identify the techniques used by the author (DDAT)
2. Look at the text structure of the author. How did he/she organize it?



## COMMUNICATOR (K.K. TJ 2024)

**The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?**

**What is the purpose of this situation:** To teach me that failure is not the end of everything

**So what:** I was absolutely devastated

**Now what:** I use this failure as a motivating factor to do better, and I use it as a mark of improvement.

One particular incident that changed me was a place in my regional tournament in 7th grade. I competed in three events; Disease Detectives, Food Science, and Heredity. I received two firsts in my regional tournament in my events Disease Detectives and Heredity. However, I placed 7th in heredity. Winning two firsts in regionals was a phenomenal achievement, yet I was deeply saddened with my placing in Heredity. I had worked hard, especially for that event (knowing that Heredity had always been challenging for me), and I deemed it to be one of my most passionate subjects. I was devastated.

However, I would not let my distress let me down. After my regionals tournament, I asked myself why I was challenged. How could I have prevented it? Could I have placed higher? Eventually, it dawned upon me. The only way to progress forward was to learn from my setback. Dwelling upon the placing wouldn't assist me in any way. Dwelling upon my distress wouldn't either. I knew that I had to fix something. Whether it was what I was studying, how I was studying, I dedicated my time to narrow down on my weak points and strengthen them. This experience affected me greatly, as I believed that I'd let down myself.

From this experience, I learned that failure is inevitable and I can not let a small failure stop me from advancing forward into future successes. Failure is not a chain that drags you down, but it is a mark that indicates that there is room for self-guided improvement. As a motivated and passionate individual, I persevered to find that chain that was holding me down and breaking it. I eventually developed a different and much more effective work style that catered to my own strengths. In the first national-level competition in my 8th grade year, I placed 4th. I would go on to place 4th out of over 120 teams and 2nd place in my regionals.

Although I considered this event as a setback, I did not allow it to hold me back in any way. Rather, I learned the most from that 7th place than I would from any other first-place award. With every failure that you encounter, there is always another success waiting ahead of you if you choose to take the path of determination.

## **Why do you like to go to a STEM school like TJ?**

### **M.B. TJ 2015**

When I was younger, I, unlike many children, didn't mind going to the doctor's office. I observed everything the doctor did and questioned everything I was unsure of: "Why did you use that instrument? How do you reach your diagnosis? How does that instrument work?" This extreme interest in what the doctors do made me realize that the study of medicine would be part of my future. No one else shared my strong inquisitiveness about biology and medicine.

When I was in 6th grade and my life was perfect; I was excelling in school, performing in dance and music recitals and life was great. Then I heard horrible news: my baby-sitter, who I knew since I was 2 months old, had terminal cancer. I was shocked and perplexed. Why her? Why anybody? I thought about her every minute. Suddenly, she left me and took a part of me with her. She was gone because of a common and destructive disease. This brought immense sadness, especially when I realized I couldn't do anything about it.

The intense impact of her death and of other friends/family members' made me realize how determined I am to be an oncologist. I immediately began researching information about cancer, always with her in the back of my mind. This curiosity pulled me into loving math and science, which are not only my favorite subjects, but are stepping stones to pursue my ideal career. The challenging TJ curriculum will offer me a solid basis in science and technology which are critical to the medical research field. This knowledge will carry over into my university studies and career. Breakthroughs in new technology will enhance this by increasing the opportunities for me to help in research for new cures/vaccines for illnesses. The STEM focus in TJHSST would enhance and foster my dream career of studying medical technology and cancer research.

## **K.S. TJ 2022**

Unlike several others I was never afraid to speak in front of a large group of people. One moment I vividly remember was in the beginning of 8th grade when I gave a one-hour solo presentation for the 300 people at the TSA interest meeting. I spoke confidently for that hour and encouraged people to sign up for TSA .

I loved public speaking so much that I decided to tryout for the Rachel Carson Middle School debate team. Out of the 350 that tried out I placed in the top 20 and qualified for my school team. As a debater, I honed my research skills and constructed arguments. One thing that gets commonly overlooked in debate is the amount of research that one has to put into making these strong arguments. I spend an average of 12 hours just to construct one debate topic. I need to do four of these topics at every tournament, that occurs six times a year. Due to the amount of research, I have become accustomed to get information quickly and have become efficient at learning a topic in a short time. I have researched both pro and con for a myriad of topics ranging from medicine prices, refugee resettlement, self-driving cars, and the electoral college.

Another thing that I learned as a debater is to get my point across, back it up with data, and convince my judge that my side of the topic is better or more important. Ever since I started debating I have felt positive side effects on my mentality. I feel more creative, focused, and confident. I will continue to debate for the rest of my life whether it is settling a friendly argument with someone or competing in a league.

# Deconstruct this essay

## Read Like a Reader

1. Describe the author.
2. Evaluate using the MS & the AOL Rating Categories

## Read Like a Writer

1. Identify the techniques used by the author (DDAT)
2. Look at the text structure of the author. How did he/she organize it?

# Deconstruct this essay

S.I. TJ 2016

As long as I remember, I loved machines, whether it was a vacuum cleaning the carpets, or a train calmly moving truckloads of goods. When I was 8, my dad took me to the B&O Train Museum. I was fascinated by how one locomotive could pull a 100 cars while trucks could only pull 1 car. While spending time there, I learned that Thomas Savery invented the first steam engine, and it was improved over time. Also, what seemed interesting was that it led to the Industrial Revolution. I was shown how an invention can change the course of the whole world. For my own curiosity to learn more about the engine, I asked so many questions and gathered books on engines from the library, and surfing the net. I remember the DK Eyewitness book I checked out in 5th grade on trains, where they explained how the steam engine worked. I learned that a steam engine works by heating the water to produce steam to push the accordion folds on the wheels. Surfing on the web, I found out that deep knowledge of STEM is necessary for building an engine. My curiosity to learn about engines slowly turned into a passion for learning more about math, science, and technology and invent an engine that is more fuel efficient, due to diminishing fossil fuels and global warming. I always wanted to attend a high school that put more focus on STEM. At the TJ open house, I found out TJ is the right place where I can obtain high quality training on STEM. I believe I could use the tools, labs, and the teachers of this school to improve by knowledge on STEM and fulfill my lifelong goal of becoming an inventor by creating an engine that will eliminate the existence of pollution.

# Deconstruct this essay

N.S. TJ 2016

When I was 6, I went to Iran and Afghanistan to visit relatives. I saw many wonderful things but also people suffering from malnutrition and other medical illnesses we don't see as often in the West. People died of curable diseases due to lack of medical attention. Medical care was inaccessible or unaffordable for many. I left with happy memories clouded with a guilty conscience. I had good health but many outside my doors did not. I haven't been to Iran or Afghanistan since but still remember the images of ailing people vividly and see them often in the news. I want to go back one day and give the people what they need: help. Heeding the saying "Charity begins at home," I initiated a character Band-Aid drive for the Pediatric Cancer Ward at Fairfax Hospital. Most of the patients needed to get many injections and "sticks" a day and the hospital could not afford character Band-Aids. The drive raised over 600 boxes of character Band Aids! The Band-Aid drive was successful, but I didn't feel like my mission was complete. It only motivated me to do more. I feel I could help more people if I had the scientific background to provide medical solutions. There are so many ways math, science and technology can diminish human suffering around the world. I would like to attend a school that will focus on math, science and technology for this reason: to enable me to acquire the knowledge and have the tools needed to best help solve some of the problems I have seen: malnutrition and genetic mutations, to name a few. Going to a S.T.E.M school will give me the option to take advanced classes on DNA and Bionanotechnology to give me some of the tools I will need to excel in medicine.

# Let's apply what you've been learning...



# Reflections...

