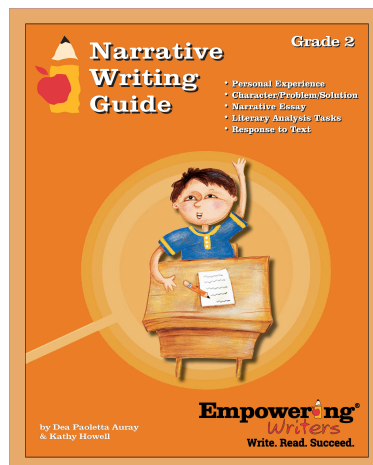




# Grade 2 Narrative Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

## SECTION 2: Beginnings



[www.empoweringwriters.com](http://www.empoweringwriters.com)  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT!

One way to make your writing more interesting and entertaining is by starting off with an irresistible, attention grabbing beginning! Here are some techniques authors use to begin their stories:

1. **AN ACTION** - *Put your main character in your setting doing something interesting and relevant to the story.*

**Ask: What would you do?**

**Ex.** *I raced to the playground and jumped up and down when I saw all of the equipment.*

**Ex.** *My legs swayed back and forth as my arms flapped to the rhythm of the swing, soaring me higher and higher through the air.*

2. **A SOUND** - *Grab the reader's attention through the use of a sound.*

**Ask: What might you hear?**

**Ex.** *WHEEEEE! Sam squealed loudly as he slid down the slide, feet first.*

**Ex.** *Creak, Squeak! Creak, Squeak! The sound of the rhythmic swing grew louder and louder as Sheree rocketed through the air.*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! (1)**

Read this opening sentence in Wanda Coven’s book – Heidi Heckelbeck and the Magic Puppy:

*Skippity Skip!*

*Hoppity Hop!*

*Jumpity Jump!*

*Heidi Heckelbeck, Lucy Lancaster, and Bruce Bickerson pranced along the path through Charmed Court Park.*

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

• **An Action**

• **A Sound**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below.

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**CHALLENGE:** Now it’s your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses the same technique as Wanda Coven used above. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number, and the author’s name.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! (2)**

Read the opening sentence in Annie Barrows' book – Ivy and Bean Take Care of the Babysitter:

*THWACK! Bean was grinding corn. She put a few pieces of Indian corn on the sidewalk and then smacked a rock down on top of them. THWACK!*

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

• **An Action**

• **A Sound**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below.

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**CHALLENGE:** Now it's your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses the same technique as Annie Barrows used above. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number, and the author's name.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! - MAKE-IT-YOUR-OWN**

Now it's your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses one of the strategies for entertaining beginnings. Look in your school or classroom library. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number and the author's name.

Read this opening sentence from \_\_\_\_\_ :

by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

• **An Action**

• **A Sound**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## SPOOKY HOUSE - BEGINNING

**REMEMBER:** Attention grabbing beginnings often use two of the following techniques:

- ACTION: What would you do?
- A SOUND: What would you hear?

Read this story beginning. It is not very interesting. The reader may not be entertained enough to want to read on. Revise this story beginning so that it is interesting and entertaining. Use one of the two techniques listed above. (Do not write the whole story – just the beginning.) Then compare the before and after versions. Which would you rather read?

**I went inside a spooky old house.**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## PLAYING WITH MY DOG - BEGINNING

**REMEMBER:** Attention grabbing beginnings often use two of the following techniques:

- **ACTION:** What would you do?
- **A SOUND:** What would you hear?

Read this story beginning. It is not very interesting. The reader may not be entertained enough to want to read on. Revise this story beginning so that it is interesting and entertaining. Use one of the two techniques listed above. (Do not write the whole story – just the beginning.) Then compare the before and after versions. Which would you rather read?

**I went outside to play with my dog.**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## MORE STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT!

One way to make your writing more interesting and entertaining is by starting off with an irresistible, attention grabbing beginning! Here are two techniques authors use to begin their stories.

1. **DIALOGUE** - *Have your main character say something.*

**Ask: What would you say?**

**Ex.** *“Watch me climb to the very top of the jungle gym,” I yelled out to my teacher as I climbed higher and higher.*

**Ex.** *“Swing me higher.” Katy yelled as her friend pushed her from behind.*

2. **THOUGHT/QUESTION** - *Show the main character’s thoughts, or raise a story question.*

**Ask: What would you wonder or worry?**

**Ex.** *It is really high at the top of the slide. Will I be able to glide down to the bottom without falling over the edge first?*

**Ex.** *Cara’s heart beat heavily in her chest and her palms felt sweaty when she realized she was hanging too far above the ground to jump. What now, she thought?*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! (3)**

Read the opening sentence in Matt Christopher’s book – The Lucky Baseball Bat:

*Barry came up the street the next morning wearing a white tee shirt with a large yellow T sewed on the front of it. Marrin wondered what the T stood for.*

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

• **Dialogue**

• **Thought/Question**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below:

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**CHALLENGE:** Now it’s your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses the same technique as Matt Christopher used above. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number, and the author’s name.

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**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! (4)**

Read the opening sentence in Steve Voake’s book – Daisy Dawson is On Her Way:  
*“Daisy, don’t dawdle!” called her mother as Daisy Dawson ambled out into the sunshine and stopped to pick up a worm that was stranded on the path.  
“Miss. Frink said you were late three times last week!”*

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

• **Dialogue**

• **Thought/Question**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below:

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**CHALLENGE:** Now it’s your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses the same technique as Steve Voake used above. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number, and the author’s name.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS BEGINNING! - MAKE-IT-YOUR-OWN**

Read this opening sentence from \_\_\_\_\_ :

by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Think about what you know about story beginnings. Circle the following technique or techniques that the author used to grab your attention.

- **An Action**
- **Dialogue**
- **Thoughts/Questions**
- **A Sound**

After reading this opening, write down what you are wondering about on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHALLENGE:** Now it's your turn to find an example of a good story or chapter beginning that uses the same technique as above. Look in your school or classroom library. Be sure to write down the title of the book, page number and the author's name.

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_







Name \_\_\_\_\_

**RIDING A BIKE - BEGINNING**

**REMEMBER:** Attention grabbing beginnings often use two of the following techniques:

- DIALOGUE or EXCLAMATION: What would you say?
- A THOUGHT/QUESTION: What are you wondering or worrying?

Read this story beginning. It is not very interesting. The reader may not be entertained enough to want to read on. Revise this story beginning so that it is interesting and entertaining. Use one of the two techniques listed above. (Do not write the whole story – just the beginning.) Then compare the before and after versions. Which would you rather read?

**I went outside to ride my bike.**

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### BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (1)

Read this story **beginning**. It is BORING!

**This is a story about catching fireflies.**

**Revise** this story **beginning**. Use one of the following techniques to make this beginning ENTERTAINING!

- **Action** - Ask: what might you be doing/how would you be moving if you were catching fireflies?
- **Dialogue or an Exclamation** - Ask: what might you exclaim as you were chasing these lightning bugs?
- **Thoughts, Questions** - Ask: what might you think, wonder or worry as you chased/caught a firefly?
- **A Sound** - Ask: what might you hear as you chased these tiny creatures?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (2)**

Read this story **beginning**. It is BORING!

**I went to a birthday party.**

**Revise** this story **beginning**. Use one of the following techniques to make this beginning ENTERTAINING!

- **Action** - Ask: what would you be doing/what action would be taking place if you were at a birthday party?
- **Dialogue or an Exclamation** - Ask: what might you say or exclaim out loud at a birthday party?
- **Thoughts, Questions** - Ask: what might you think, wonder or worry at a birthday party?
- **A Sound** - Ask: what might you hear at the party?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (3)

Read this story **beginning**. It is BORING!

**I had a fun day at the zoo.**

**Revise** this story **beginning**. Use one of the following techniques to make this beginning ENTERTAINING!

- **Action** - Ask: what would you be doing/how would you be moving at the zoo?
- **Dialogue or an Exclamation** - Ask: what might you say or exclaim out loud at the zoo?
- **Thoughts, Questions** - Ask: what might you think, wonder or worry as you visited the many animals at the zoo?
- **A Sound** - Ask: what sounds might you hear at the zoo?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Paddlepaws

I was running as fast as I could on the cobblestone sidewalk. Just ahead of me, I could see my three friends scampering gracefully with their tails held high. As always, I was lagging behind. My great big paws made me the least agile of my kitten companions. However careful I tried to be, I was always stumbling over my very own paws, which were as round and wide as a ping pong paddle. That's how I got my name, Paddlepaws.

But today I didn't want to think about my paddlepaws and how much I hated them. Today the snows of winter had finally melted away, the sun was shining and I wanted to have fun.

My friends and I were heading to our favorite place — the wide, wooden dock where rusty fishing boats were anchored and sea gulls squawked overhead. The sweet smell of fish filled the air and sometimes a friendly fisherman would let us snack on the last of his bait.

When we arrived, the docks were empty. Whiskers found a round stone and the four of us batted it around for a while. We were sniffing at a pile of salty seaweed when Maisy spotted a big red jellyfish floating on the surface of the water. All four of us leaned in to take a closer look.

Splash! Suddenly I was in the water! At first, I was frightened, but once I began paddling with my big, strong paws I felt safe. In no time at all, I was actually enjoying my swim in the cool water. My wide-eyed friends gasped in amazement. Each wished they could swim like me.

(continued)



My heart swelled with pride. “It’s all in the paddlepaws,” I said, feeling grateful for the large and lovely paws that made me a strong swimmer. Moments later, I was shaking myself dry on the beach.

Today, I still stumble over my big paws but I’m never ashamed of them. I wish everybody in the world could learn to love what’s unique about them, just as I’ve learned to love my paddlepaws.

**Summarizing Framework:**

This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_.

The problem was \_\_\_\_\_.

The problem was solved when \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: BEGINNINGS**

Read the story Paddlepaws and draw a ring around the entertaining beginning. What technique did the author use to entertain the reader? How do you know? Underline the sentence(s) that show the technique the author used. Write your answers in complete sentences using the sentence starters provided.

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**Sentence Starters:**

- The story begins with \_\_\_\_\_.
- The reader knows this because \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the story \_\_\_\_\_ the author uses \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author wrote \_\_\_\_\_.
- We see this when the main character \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the beginning \_\_\_\_\_.
- This shows \_\_\_\_\_.



