NARRATIVE ARTICLE WRITING

Upper-Intermediate (B2) — A Clear, Practical Guide

1. WHAT IS A NARRATIVE ARTICLE?

A narrative article tells a story about a real or imagined experience. At B2 level, you should do more than describe a sequence of events. A strong narrative has a clear structure, interesting details, varied past tenses, good linking expressions, and a final reflection.

The structure is simple:

INTRODUCTION → BACKGROUND EVENT → MAIN EVENT → CONCLUSION / LINK TO NOW

2. WHAT TO WRITE IN EACH PART

PART	YOUR JOB
Introduction	Set the scene. Tell the reader when, where and who. Create interest.
Background event	Explain what was happening before the important moment.
Main event	Describe the most important or dramatic part in detail.
Conclusion / Link to now	Reflect on the experience and explain why it still matters.

3. HOW TO START — INTRODUCTION

Do not begin with a boring sentence such as *"Last year I went on a trip."* Give the reader a little atmosphere and a reason to continue reading.

Better openings:

• It was supposed to be an ordinary Saturday, but it turned into a day I will never forget.

• Looking back, I still remember the moment everything changed.

• I had never experienced anything like it before.

• The morning started perfectly. I had no idea what was waiting for me.

Teacher tip: A good introduction usually answers **When? Where? Who?** and gives the reader a small **hook**.

4. BACKGROUND EVENT — BUILD THE STORY

Now give the information the reader needs before the main event. Describe what people were doing, what they expected, or what had already happened.

Useful language:

• At first, everything seemed normal.

• We were walking along the beach when…

• While we were waiting, …

• We had already been there for two hours when…

- By the time we arrived, …
- Everything was going according to plan until…

B2 Grammar: Use past continuous for background (*We were walking…*), past simple for completed events (*we heard a noise*), and past perfect for an earlier past action (*we had already left*).

5. MAIN EVENT — MAKE IT INTERESTING

This is the most important part. Slow down and describe the key moment. Include actions, reactions, feelings and details. Avoid simply listing events.

Strong expressions:

• Suddenly, …

• Without warning, …

• To my surprise, …

• For a moment, I didn't know what to do.

• My heart started beating faster.

• I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

• Fortunately, …

• Unfortunately, …

• Eventually, …

Upgrade your vocabulary:
Instead of *"I was very scared,"* write *"A wave of panic ran through me."*
Instead of *"We were very tired,"* write *"By that point, we were completely exhausted."*

6. FULL MODEL ARTICLE — READ THIS CAREFULLY

The Day Everything Went Wrong

Introduction

It was supposed to be the perfect weekend. Last summer, my best friend and I decided to spend a few days in a small town by the sea. We had planned everything carefully and were looking forward to relaxing, exploring the area and taking a break from our usual routine.

Background event

On our second morning, we decided to go for a long walk along the coast. The sun was shining and the sea was unusually calm. We had already been walking for almost two hours when we noticed dark clouds gathering in the distance. Although the weather forecast had mentioned a small chance of rain, we didn't think much of it and continued walking.

Main event

A few minutes later, the wind suddenly became much stronger. Without warning, heavy rain started falling. We quickly realized that we were too far from the town to turn back easily. For a moment, neither of us knew what to do. We were completely soaked, and the path in front of us was becoming difficult to see. Fortunately, I noticed a small café on the other side of the road. We ran towards it and managed to get inside just before the storm became even worse. Sitting by the window, we watched the rain hitting the glass while we laughed at how badly our perfect plan had gone wrong.

Conclusion / Link to now

Looking back, that day was actually one of the best parts of the trip. It taught me that not everything has to go according to plan for an experience to be memorable. Since then, I have tried to be more flexible when

things don't work out as expected. Even now, whenever a plan goes wrong, I remember that rainy afternoon and remind myself that unexpected moments can sometimes become the best memories.

7. WHY THIS ARTICLE WORKS

• **Clear structure:** Each paragraph has a different purpose.

• **Good time control:** Past simple, past continuous and past perfect are used naturally.

• **Sequencing:** Expressions such as *On our second morning, A few minutes later, Without warning, Fortunately, Looking back* guide the reader.

• **Specific details:** The sea, dark clouds, heavy rain, the café and the window make the story easier to imagine.

• **Feelings and reactions:** The writer explains how the characters reacted instead of only saying what happened.

• **Reflection:** The final paragraph connects the past experience to the writer's life now.

8. HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN ARTICLE — STEP BY STEP

STEP 1 — Choose the story

Choose one memorable event: a trip, an accident, a surprise, a difficult day, a celebration, or a mistake.

STEP 2 — Make a 4-line plan

Write one or two ideas for each part: Introduction / Background / Main Event / Conclusion.

STEP 3 — Add details

Ask yourself: What could I see? What could I hear? How did I feel? What did other people do?

STEP 4 — Improve your verbs

Replace simple verbs such as go, say, look and get with more precise verbs when appropriate: rush, whisper, stare, notice, grab, realize, hesitate.

STEP 5 — Connect the events

Use linking expressions instead of repeating “then”.

STEP 6 — Finish with reflection

Answer: What did I learn? How do I feel about it now? Has it changed me?

9. USEFUL B2 LANGUAGE

Purpose	Useful expressions
Starting	It all started when… / It was supposed to be… / Looking back…
Sequence	At first… / Meanwhile… / A few minutes later… / Shortly afterwards…
Sudden event	Suddenly… / Without warning… / All of a sudden…
Reaction	To my surprise… / I couldn't believe… / I didn't know how to react…
Result	As a result… / Fortunately… / Eventually… / In the end…
Reflection	I realized that… / Since then… / The experience taught me… / Even now…

10. COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

• Don't write one huge paragraph. Separate the four stages clearly.

• Don't use “then” in every sentence. Vary your linking words.

• Don't use only past simple. Mix tenses naturally.

• Don't describe every tiny detail. Focus on details that help the story.

• Don't end suddenly. Give a short reflection or link to the present.

• Don't memorize the model article and copy it. Use its structure and language as a guide.

11. WRITING PROMPTS

1. Write about a time when a trip did not go according to plan.

2. Write about a day when you received an unexpected piece of news.

3. Write about a time when you had to make an important decision.

4. Write about an embarrassing experience that you can laugh about now.

5. Write about a moment when a stranger helped you.

12. FINAL B2 CHECK

■ Does my introduction make the reader interested?

■ Is the background clear?

■ Is the main event the most detailed part?

■ Have I used a range of past tenses?

■ Have I used linking words?

■ Have I included feelings or reactions?

■ Have I used some precise vocabulary?

■ Does my conclusion connect the story to the present?

■ Can I remove any unnecessary sentences?

Remember: A good narrative article is not just about what happened. It is about making the reader feel that they were there with you.