

Narrative Writing: Removing Irrelevant Details

For strong narrative writing, it's important to stay on topic. Irrelevant details, or extra information that is not really important, can distract the reader from the main idea.

Each paragraph below has one sentence that is not relevant to the narrative.

Cross out that sentence to strengthen the paragraph.



1. Hesitantly, I walked onto the stage holding my violin, blinking nervously in the bright lights as the audience clapped politely. Why had I ever agreed to perform in front of the whole school? I walked across the stage and took my place behind the music stand. I started playing the violin when I was seven. After taking a deep breath to calm my nerves, I started to play. As the music poured forth, I forgot my fears and focused only on reading the notes. By the end of the song, I was no longer afraid. I beamed with pride as the audience applauded and gave me a standing ovation.

2. It was a crisp autumn morning, and Quinn and her mother were exploring the local farmers market. Her mother's eye-catching red scarf danced in the breeze as they strolled through the market, buying some crusty bread here, a few vegetables there. Quinn followed along, picking her way through the crowd, admiring how the trees had turned into multi-colored works of art. This past summer had been the hottest one on record. Suddenly, Quinn realized she didn't see her mother anywhere! She scanned the crowd, hoping to catch a glimpse of her mother's bright red scarf. A spicy-sweet smell caught Quinn's attention, and she saw her mother walking toward her holding two cups of fresh, steaming apple cider. What a relief! They sat on a bench and drank their cider, chatting happily as red-gold leaves swirled around their feet.

3. Last Saturday was a perfect day. My cousins Reid and Bella came to visit. We decided to go to the park for a picnic. The sun shone brightly and sparkled on the water as we laid out a colorful blanket near the lake. We told jokes and laughed as we ate our lunch under the shade of the trees. My favorite sandwich is grilled cheese, but we didn't bring any of those. After lunch, Reid took out his new dragon-shaped kite, and we watched as it rose into the sky and danced among the clouds. As we watched the kite fly higher and higher, we all agreed that this was the best day ever!

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4. Every Friday evening, Ava plays basketball with her friends. They all meet in the park across the street from Ava's apartment building. Ava also plays lacrosse on the school team. When everyone arrives, they practice dribbling and shooting the ball. Then, they pick their positions. Ava's favorite position is shooting guard. She loves the feeling when she shoots the ball and her heart stands still for a moment as the ball circles the rim and then, *whoosh*, it falls in the net! The friends play for hours, but when it gets dark, they all head home. These Friday night games are the highlight of Ava's week, and she's already looking forward to next Friday.

5. The attic door made a creepy, squeaking sound as I turned the rusty knob. I never go in the attic if I can help it, but my grandma broke her ankle and someone had to get the Thanksgiving decorations. The door cracked open, and a stale smell greeted me as I shuffled in, gripping my flashlight. It cast light upon various piles of old stuff covered in dust and cobwebs. Where was the box Grandma had sent me up here for? I hate watching scary movies. I bumped my knee into what looked like an antique desk. Ouch! I stood up, rubbing my knee, and my distress retreated as I caught a glimpse of a faded cardboard box labeled "THANKSGIVING." Just what I needed! I grabbed the box and made a beeline for the door. I certainly wouldn't be returning to the attic any time soon.

6. Last week, my family went for a hike in a nearby state park, and we discovered a delightful surprise! The hike started off like any other as we walked the path beneath the ancient trees. Eventually we came to the top of a small hill, and I noticed something glinting from a hidden cavity in an old tree stump. My brother and I went over to check it out and were perplexed to find an old metal lunchbox. My brother and I use small cooler bags instead of lunchboxes. When we opened it, we found some really cool old keys, a few pressed pennies, a notebook, and a pencil. Dad said it was from a kind of game in which people hide little treasures in interesting places for other people to find. After studying the antique keys and souvenir pennies, we all signed the notebook before carefully placing the lunchbox back in the tree stump so others could find it later.