



Writing an Eyewitness Account

The General Idea

- Through an **eyewitness account**, a writer can share an experience with someone who has never seen the event. A writer's vivid retelling of an experience can create something like a movie in the reader's mind, allowing him or her to imagine every detail and action.
- An eyewitness account takes the form of a **narrative**, or story. Therefore, **choose an event you saw from beginning to end and can recall clearly**. Your reader should be able to see the account as you did, so be sure you can remember plenty of details.

Narration/Description: Witnessing an Event

KEY CONCEPT

When choosing experiences, focus on events that you observed rather than participated in. For example, you would write about the soccer game you saw instead of the basketball game you played in.

Brainstorm a list of events you have witnessed. You might consider:

- _ sports events such as a soccer game or track meet
- _ school events such as a science fair or art exhibit opening
- _ natural events such as a flood or sunset
- _ neighbourhood events such as a parade or street festival

Decide which events:

- _ you find most interesting
- _ you remember most clearly
- _ you saw from beginning to end
- _ you observed without participating in

Think About Purpose and Audience

Share Your Vision Your **purpose**, or reason for writing, is to share a memorable experience. You would not need to write a letter describing a snowboarding exhibition to a friend who saw it with you. Instead, you would want to tell a friend who was not there about the thrill of watching people glide on the snow and flip through the air.

Gather Events and Details

What Happened? You are thinking about the snowboarding exhibition and all you can remember is the woman who amazed you by flipping through the air. Your mind may jump to the most exciting moments or to your favourite part of the experience. However, there is more to an eyewitness account than the big moments. You are telling a story, so **think about and list the small events that made up the experience from beginning to end.**

Who, What, Where, How A good eyewitness account will give plenty of specific information to create a complete picture of the event for the reader. You can flesh out details from the events by asking yourself these four questions.

- Questions about **people**, such as

Who

Who took part in this event?

Who caught my attention?

- Questions that get at **sensory details**, such as

What

*What did I hear (including **dialogue**), see, smell, feel, or taste?*

- Questions about **places**, such as

Where

Where did this event take place?

- Questions about **feelings**, such as

How

How did I feel watching this event?

Check your list
for unnecessary events—

those that don't really add to the narrative.

Think about these questions:

Does each event add something to my story? Can I make each event vivid for my audience?

Order Up Once you list the events and details involved in your experience, you'll need to put them in order. **The best order for an eyewitness account is chronological (or time) order.** Tell the events in the order they happened—first, second, third, and so on. Chronological order helps the reader follow the story.

To make the chart below, the first list the events that make up the experience. Then, for each event, list details that answer the Who, What, Where, and How questions.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Who?</u>	<u>What?</u>	<u>Where?</u>	<u>How?</u>