



2022 NAPLAN Topic – Years 7 & 9 The Journey

Planning (8 minutes)

Here is Jen's plan, including her initial brainstorm of ideas for the topic and then her ideas for how the story will unfold.

Describe a journey. 8 mins

Physical - Nepal
 - Europe - 20. Freedom
Responsibility
Inner journey.
 - Grand Canyon of snow. Chris hypothermia

Sport
 Business
 Skiing.
 Dyslexic
 - letters don't move on page.
 blur, jumble. Not sunk in.

Cooking 4bs. 1sp.

Spelling
 Nursery rhymes
 Drops - short terms memory.
 Books scared me. Exhausted me.
 Non fiction ok. Short. lots of car files
 Phrases. Blue glasses. Dictation. tests
 Numbers good. Stayed put. asmita. fake.
 Good at sport.

Writing (27 minutes)

Here is Jen's response to the NAPLAN topic. She wrote this in the time that all children receive to draft their NAPLAN writing test. We have not changed Jen's spelling, grammar or punctuation – this example is exactly as she wrote it in the time available.

Sizzling Start

When your mum's an author and she finds out you can't read, well, it was all going to go downhill from there.

'What do you mean the letters jump around?' she demanded.

Try explaining that when you were six. Didn't everyone have trouble pinning those pesky little black shapes on a page and not let them move.

'Letters don't move,' Mum insisted. Huh. Oh yes they did. They swirled if you didn't concentrate. Swopped places. And by the time you got to the end of a sentence, it was hard to remember what the start was.

Backfill

There began a lot of trips in the car, to doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, all with encouraging smiles – and no help at all. There were lots of visits to libraries too, as if somehow I could learn to read by osmosis. Uggg. Even walking into a room full of books was a nightmare.

'It will improve with age,' the wrds came time and time again. Oh great, by the time I was a grandfather I would be able to read a whole novel. Not exactly top of my life's to do list.

Experience 1

The trouble is, our whole world runs on words, written words. You want to plan a trip with friends, screens full of words flash up. Watch TV and you get happy family scenarios where parents and kids are cosied up with a book. On the trains and buses, people are there, reading magazine, textbooks, tapping into some mysterious world of knowledge and pleasure I can't crack. At school, every single thing is about words. 'Finish reading that for homework/write an 800 word essay/research the edible plants in Victoria/take this down in notes....' Every hour, every day is a constant denial of this secret world of words I can't unlock.

Are you dumb, just because running a marathon is easier than reading a book?

Experience 2

They tracked it to ear infections I had as a kid. I mean if you can't hear words properly, how can you lay down the sounds of words.

'Let's go catl pak,' mum would speak, and that's what I heard. It was only when we arrived that I realised she was saying the Castle Park. My life was full of mysteries.

Experience 3

There were some frindge benefits of course. I got good at maths, those little black numbers 1–9 stayed right in their place on a page. I learnt to ready people’s body language and emotions, because that was visual decoding. I escaped out of the classroom and enrolled in every sports team out, so I got some excellent training running after balls and swimming and jumping and getting good friends. Most of all, I found ways to learn. Ask me about Tesla and solar power, data crunching, solar energy, long term economic and societal impact of global warming.

Let me go back to my mum – did I mention my mum wrote for a living? A strange contrast the two of us. But my mum also knew one thing: ideas are inside you, they are formed in your brain and in your sould and in your experience. And you need to share those ideas to others – somehow.

So she shared with me TED talks, we watched mvies, You Tube clips, we laughed over sitcoms and comedy festivals. Siri became my best friend. Postcasts became my teachers, knowledge flowed at last back into my world.

Exciting Ending

It’s been a strange journey, hard, puzzling, frustrating. I don’t know if I will every really want to read a book. I definitely won’t write one.

But maybe a TED talk? Maybe some You Tube clips? Maybe I’ll start small with a blog.

Because I have some stories to share and some ideas that might help the world – and I’ll get those out somehow.

Editing (5 minutes)

Here are the changes Jen made in the time available for editing at the end of the NAPLAN writing test.

Sizzling Start

When your mum's an author and she finds out you can't read, well, it was all going to go downhill from there.

'What do you mean the letters jump around?' she demanded.

Try explaining that when you were six. Didn't everyone have trouble pinning those pesky little black shapes on a page and not let them move.

'Letters don't move,' Mum insisted. Huh. Oh yes they did. They swirled if you didn't concentrate. Swopped places. And by the time you got to the end of a sentence, it was hard to remember what the start was.

Backfill

There began a lot of trips in the car, to doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, all with encouraging smiles – and no help at all. There were lots of visits to libraries too, as if somehow I could learn to read by ~~ozmosis~~ osmosis. Uggg. Even walking into a room full of books ~~gave me a headache~~ was a nightmare.

'It will improve with age,' ~~everyone said over and over~~ the wrds came time and time again. Oh great, by the time I was a grandfather I would be able to read a whole novel. Not exactly top of my life's to do list.

Experience 1

The trouble is, our whole world runs on words, written words. You want to plan a trip with friends, screens full of words flash up. Watch TV and you get happy family ~~senarios~~ scenarios where parents and kids are cosied up with a book. On the trains and buses, people are there, reading magazine, textbooks, tapping into some mysterious world of knowledge and pleasure I can't crack. At school, every single thing is about words. 'Finish reading that for homework/write an 800 word essay/research the edible plants in Victoria/take ~~this~~ these down ~~these~~ in notes....' Every hour, every day is a constant denial of this secret world of ~~wrds~~ words I can't unlock.

Are you dumb, just because running a marathon is easier than reading a book?

Experience 2

They tracked it to ear infections I had as a kid. I mean if you can't hear words properly, how can you lay down the sounds of words?

'Let's go catl pak,' mum would speak, and that's what I heard. It was only when we arrived that I ~~realised~~ realised she was saying the Castle Park. My life was full of mysteries.

Experience 3

There were some ~~fringed~~ benefits of course. I got good at maths, those little black numbers 1–9 stayed right in their place on a page. I learnt to read people's body language and emotions, because that was visual decoding. I escaped out of the classroom and enrolled in every sports team out, so I got some excellent training running after balls and swimming and jumping and ~~getting~~ making good friends ~~on the teams~~. ~~Most of all, I found ways to learn. Ask me about Tesla and solar power, data crunching, solar energy, long term economic and societal impact of global warming.~~

Let me go back to my mum – did I mention my mum wrote for a living? A strange contrast the two of us. But my mum also knew one thing: ideas are inside you, they are formed in your brain, ~~and~~ in your ~~soul~~ ~~and in your~~ experience ~~and in your soul~~. And you need to share those ideas to others – somehow.

So she shared with me TED talks, we watched ~~movies~~ movies, You Tube clips, we laughed over sitcoms and comedy festivals. Siri became my best friend. ~~Podcasts~~ Podcasts became my teachers, knowledge flowed at last back into my world.

Exciting Ending

~~Finally, I found those ways to learn. The secret word empire had a back door. Ask me about Tesla and solar power, data crunching, solar energy, long term economic and societal impact of global warming.~~

It's been a strange journey, hard, puzzling, frustrating. I don't know if I will every really want to read a book. I definitely won't write one.

But maybe a TED talk? Maybe some You Tube clips? Maybe I'll start small with a blog.

Because I have some ~~stories to share and some~~ ideas that ~~maybe, just maybe~~ might help the world – and ~~##~~ need to get those out somehow.

Marked Results

2022 NAPLAN writing task (Years 7 & 9) – Narrative Genre

NAP Marker: Lani Brockwell

Criterion	Marks	Score	Comments
Audience	0–6	5	The narrative demonstrates a strong understanding of the audience's expectations. It supports and engages the reader through clear language choices and narrative devices. There is a strong sense of 'authorial voice' which indicates to the reader that the story has been planned and the author is directing the reader's attention with purpose.
Text Structure	0–4	3	The text has the elements of a narrative (Introduction, complication and resolution) in a very subtle way. The complication is not a traditional for the genre and thus the resolution does not pack the punch that other 'complication and resolution' pairs might.
Ideas	0–5	4	The ideas within the text are substantial, elaborated and contribute to the central storyline. The story is tightly planned and each part of the story is developing the reader's understanding. There is a suggestion of an underlying theme.
Character and Setting	0–4	4	The story revolves around two characters and we are given more information about one. Our understanding of the character is formed through their thoughts, beliefs and speech. We are not given similar levels of detail about the setting, but that does not detract from the mark. The story is written in the character's voice and our understanding of the story is formed by hearing their thoughts. This creates a shared understanding of the character's distinct difficulties, desires and motives.
Vocabulary	0–5	5	The story contains an array of precise terms and adverbial phrases. It is a consistent approach that is used effectively throughout the writing to build the audience's engagement and to create a shared understanding.
Cohesion	0–4	3	The text demonstrates control of the narrative tense. Cohesive devices are correctly used to support the reader's experience. There is accurate use of referring words.
Paragraphing	0–2	2	The paragraphing is organised to enhance to the reader's experience. This is further evidenced by the punchy last line.
Sentence Structure	0–6	4	Mostly correct sentence structure. One errors of tense: Try explaining that when you were six. One incorrect article and incorrect tense: Didn't everyone have trouble pinning those pesky little black shapes on a page and not let them move.
Punctuation	0–5	4	Some incorrect use of punctuation including forward slashes to denote a list and hyphens to create pause.
Spelling	0–6	5	Spelling is very close to a band six. There is a single spelling error (swopped). Correctly spelt words include many that are classed as difficult or challenging. Difficult: Definitely, frustrating, economic, experience, mention, emotion, decoding, language, insisted, sentence Challenging: visual, societal, mysteries, concentrate

Total marks: 39 out of 47 (Band 9)

Jen's Insights

Planning

In NAPLAN, students have just five minutes to plan their text. This is a big ask, especially for a narrative when you have to brainstorm an idea for the story and then plan out the different elements of the story, such as a great start, a problem, characters, settings and an impactful ending.

The good news is that students who have been trained in the Seven Steps will have had plenty of practice brainstorming original ideas and plotting those ideas on the Story Graph to create a plan for their text. This will stand them in great stead when they need to do this under pressure on the big day.

On page 1 you can see that when I brainstormed the topic 'The Journey', my first ideas revolved around literal journeys, such as the hikes I did in Nepal and the Grand Canyon, and the 'rite of passage' trip I took at age 20, hitching alone around Europe for six months.

Once I pushed past these initial ideas, I landed on something more original – my son's dyslexia journey. As we say at Seven Steps, you need to think differently about a topic to come up with a great original idea.

I then created a rough plan for my story. Because of the time limit, I didn't manage to create an entire plan. Instead, I planned the first two parts and the end – the rest had to flow as I wrote.

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 5 minutes available for planning:

- **Push beyond your first idea:** Encourage students to dig deeper and think differently about the topic to come up with something original.
- **Pick the right-sized idea:** Teach students to identify a short story idea (a slice of life), rather than a movie-length idea; otherwise, they won't finish their text, let alone have time to edit it. There are 5 marks up for grabs for ideas, so students need something original but not too ambitious.
- **Plan on paper:** Even if students are sitting NAPLAN online, it's a good idea to plan on paper. Computers are too linear and not as conducive to creativity.
- **Visualise the Story Graph:** Remind students to visualise the Story Graph and use this to map out how the story will unfold. In NAPLAN, you don't have the luxury of doing an entire plan, so at the very least students need to have a Sizzling Start, a problem and an Exciting Ending in mind before they start writing.

Writing

It can be hard to write a complete text in 30 minutes; the key is to keep it simple. Picking the right-sized idea and coming up with a base structure in the planning time will make the writing so much easier.

Students who have been taught the Seven Steps techniques will have had plenty of practice writing a Sizzling Start, building tension and coming up with an Exciting Ending that wraps up their story and satisfies the reader. Students need practice doing this in both complete texts and parts of texts before they sit NAPLAN, so that they are confident putting it all together. The more students practise, the faster they will become, which is important given the time constraints in NAPLAN.

I came up with the Sizzling Start in the planning time as that is what sets the 'voice' of the piece, so that made it much easier when I started writing. The body paragraphs began to flow more quickly and easily as the narrative unfolded because of the time I had spent planning out the structure of the text.

I can see from my rough plan on page 1 that I didn't end up incorporating the fun anecdote about my son getting the measures 'tbs' and 'tsp' mixed up while cooking and consequently adding way too much salt. Students need to be prepared to ditch ideas if they're running out of time. It's important to make sure they know this. Sometimes an idea just won't fit in the time they have available and that's okay!

You will also see from the marker's comments on page 6 that I lost a mark for text structure because: 'The complication is not a traditional for the genre and thus the resolution does not pack the punch that other 'complication and resolution' pairs might'. I have written a narrative recount, retelling a real-life experience rather than a traditional story structure with a series of escalating problems. As a result, my ending has less impact than it would if it was resolving a central problem or complication. Had I stuck more closely to the Story Graph, I may have scored full marks for text structure.

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 30 minutes available for writing:

- **Aim for quality, not quantity:** Writing more words will not get extra marks. It's better to have a short, well-written text than a long text with lots of half developed ideas.
- **Follow your plan:** Make sure students use their plan as a roadmap while writing their response so that they don't go off on a tangent.
- **Ditch ideas, if necessary:** Students may need to adapt their plan and ditch ideas if time is getting tight.
- **Finish your text:** It's crucial that students allow enough time to write an ending. They will lose a significant number of marks in several assessment criteria if the text is unfinished.

Editing

I sit NAPLAN every year and, in the past, I've run out of time at the end for editing because I've been too ambitious and written too much. One year I wrote 1,200 words and lost marks because I didn't have time to proofread my work.

As you know from the Seven Steps, there are three types of editing – structural editing, expression editing and line editing. It's unlikely students will have time to do much big picture editing in five minutes, so they should focus on improving the expression and proofreading their work.

You can see the changes I made in the edited version of my response on pages 4–5. I've picked up a few typos, reworded and reordered some parts to make the text flow better, and worked on the ending to give the last line more impact.

Top Tips

Here are my tips for making the most of the 5 minutes available for editing:

- **Check punctuation and spelling:** There are 5 marks for punctuation and 6 marks for spelling, so students must allow time to check for typos.
- **Work on the expression:** There are 4 marks for cohesion and 5 marks for vocabulary, so ensuring that the text flows well and uplevelling the vocabulary will score a few extra marks.
- **Ensure sections build up to a crescendo:** There are 4 marks for text structure, so checking that the text follows the Story Graph is time well spent.
- **Finesse the ending:** There are 6 marks for audience, so it's important that the ending leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

Jen McVeity

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