

The Narration-Trivium Lesson Plan

The Narration-Trivium lesson plan ensures that students assimilate content knowledge through centering the lesson on narration. The surrounding features of the lesson help students hone the trivium arts of grammar, dialectic and rhetoric in their full historical meaning as the arts of language: grammar, the art of reading and interpretation; dialectic, the art of seeking the truth through discussion; rhetoric, the art of truthful and persuasive discourse. In this way, students are trained to assimilate knowledge through the tools of learning, learning the sciences through the arts. In order to use the lesson plan, simply copy-paste the following table into your own document. Then follow the prompts for each box to plan each stage in the lesson. Feel free to creatively adapt it to the needs of your subject and students. I recommend using this lesson structure primarily for inspirational or content-based subjects. Let me know if you have any questions!

Subject:	Date and Time:
Trivium Target – Language Skill Objective	What is the chief language arts skill that students will develop? At the end of this lesson will a student primarily be able to produce an interpretation, a train of reasoning or a persuasive discourse? What sub-skills in these areas will be practiced and honed at a new level of sophistication or mastery?
Pre-Grammar – Set-up or 1st Little Talk	Usually vocabulary, background information, and rehearsal of previous content to prepare students’ minds for a high-comprehension reading. For instance, a history lesson could involve having students find important locations on a map. A literature lesson could discuss a certain concept from literary analysis or the sphere of life portrayed in the book. A science lesson could involve recalling the meaning of special vocabulary and the illustrative examples from the text.
Grammar – Reading of a Rich Text	What is the text, author? Which pages constitute the lesson? How will the teacher or students read the text? Be sure to give appropriate details for a substitute. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher reads aloud expressively ● Teacher directs student reading ● Students read silently or read previously at home
Pre-Rhetoric – Narration	How will students tell back what they have read? Will they tell back all of the content or is it strategic to focus on a particular section? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oral narration with additions and corrections taken from other students ● Partner or group narration (right to left, or left to right; colors or front-back, left-right) ● String narration (teacher calls on students successively at stages in the telling) ● Written narration (on paper, in notebook, typed, on a whiteboard?)
Dialectic – 2nd Little Talk	How will you guide students in interpreting, understanding, and thinking through the implications of what they have read? Planning for this might look like listing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion questions ● Ideas and concepts ● Content mastery goals
Rhetoric –	How will students demonstrate their mastery of the new knowledge, while

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Response	completing increasingly sophisticated rhetorical tasks? Will they work as a class, in groups or individually on this response? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming, comparison and contrast, or other tables and charts • Preparation for speech or presentation on topic • Writing prompt (on paper, in notebook, typed, on a whiteboard?)
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Exercise: Writing a Narration Lesson

Choose a passage from a text you teach in a content-based subject like history, literature, Bible, or Science. Then using the questions above as a guide, fill out each box in a way that will most artfully cultivate understanding and wisdom in your students. Be sure to imagine a specific group of students to make choices that you believe will best target their growth in knowledge, habits and skills.

Subject:	Date and Time:
Trivium Target – Language Skill Objective	
Pre-Grammar – Set-up or 1st Little Talk	
Grammar – Reading of a Rich Text	
Pre-Rhetoric – Narration	
Dialectic – 2nd Little Talk	
Rhetoric – Response	