My Last Vacation | Grade 4

Reading, Text Evidence & Personal Narrative Writing

Student Workbook | Print-Ready

Learning goals: Read a short personal narrative; answer comprehension questions; use the RACE strategy

to support an answer with text evidence; plan and write a personal narrative about a past holiday or school

break.

What is RACE?

R — Restate: Turn the question into the beginning of your answer.

A — Answer: Give a clear answer to the question.

C — Cite: Use a detail from the reading passage as evidence.

E — Explain: Tell how the detail supports your answer.

Important: RACE is used for answering questions about a text. Your own vacation story

uses personal narrative writing instead.

Teacher note: Students who did not travel can write about a school break spent at home or a memorable day off.

PREVIEW BIGSMART STUDY PREVIEW

TEACHER GUIDE | Instructional Reference

Learning Objectives
Students will identify key details and a character's changing feelings in a narrative; support a written response with text evidence using RACE; and plan and write a personal narrative in chronological order.

Materials & Preparation
Print student pages 3–8. Keep the separate Answer Key & Sample Responses for teacher use. Students need pencils; highlighters are optional. The story and activities are designed for Grade 4.

Suggested Teaching Sequence (2–3 lessons)
Lesson 1 (30–40 min): Read "A Weekend at the Lake" independently or together. Discuss Maya's expectations and experiences. Complete Section 2 and review answers using the passage.

Lesson 2 (30–40 min): Model R (restate), A (answer), C (cite), and E (explain). Have students complete Section 3, then combine their ideas into a paragraph in Section 4. Check that evidence is relevant and the explanation connects it to the answer.

Lesson 3 (30–45 min): Students plan a true personal experience in Section 5, then write a beginning, middle, and ending in Section 6. Invite revision for sequence, specific details, feelings, and conventions.

Instructional Notes
RACE is for answering questions about a text; Section 6 is personal narrative writing, not a RACE response. Students may write about a trip, a school break at home, or a memorable day off. Do not require students to disclose private family circumstances or to have traveled.

Assessment: Personal Narrative (10 points)

Criterion (0–2 points)	Look for
Setting and people	Clearly introduces where and with whom the experience happened
Sequence of events	Presents events in understandable chronological order
Specific details	Includes relevant actions and memorable details
Feelings and reflection	Describes feelings and why the experience mattered
Conventions and clarity	Uses understandable sentences, capitals, and punctuation

Scoring per criterion: 2 = clear and complete; 1 = developing or partially present; 0 = absent or not yet demonstrated. Total: /10.

Answer Key Guidance & Differentiation
Section 2 has text-based answers; equivalent accurate wording is acceptable. Sections 3–4 are evaluated for a correct interpretation, relevant evidence, and a clear explanation. Sections 5–6 have no single correct answer; the examples are models, not required content. Offer sentence starters or oral rehearsal as needed; challenge advanced writers to add dialogue or sensory details.

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1 | Read the Story

A Weekend at the Lake

Last spring, Maya and her family spent three days at a small lake near their town. They did not take a plane or stay at a fancy hotel. Instead, they packed sandwiches, borrowed a tent, and drove for forty minutes to a campground. Maya was disappointed at first. She had hoped to visit a big city.

On Saturday morning, Maya helped her younger brother, Leo, gather sticks for a campfire. Then their father taught them how to paddle a canoe. Maya was nervous when the canoe rocked, but she listened carefully and kept trying. By lunchtime, she could steer it toward the dock.



That evening, rain began to fall. The family hurried into the tent and played a guessing game while they waited for the storm to pass. Leo made everyone laugh with his silly clues. When the rain stopped, Maya stepped outside and saw the lake shining under the moon. On the drive home, Maya told her mother that the trip had been better than she expected. She had learned something new, helped her family, and enjoyed time without a television or phone. She decided that an adventure did not have to happen far from home.

Vocabulary: disappointed — unhappy because something was not as expected; steer — guide the direction of something.

Name :.....Date:.....

2 | Reading Comprehension

1. Where did Maya and her family go?

_____

_____

2. Why was Maya disappointed at first?

_____

_____

3. What new skill did Maya learn?

_____

_____

4. What did the family do while it rained?

_____

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5. What lesson did Maya learn by the end of the trip?

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_____

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Name :.....Date:.....

3 | Practice the RACE Strategy

Question: How did Maya's feelings about the trip change? Use evidence from the story.

R — Restate the question.

_____

_____

A — Answer the question.

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C — Cite a detail from the story.

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E — Explain how the detail supports your answer.

_____

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_____

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Name :.....Date:.....

4 | Write a Complete RACE Answer

Question: How did Maya's feelings about the trip change? Use evidence from the story.

Combine your R, A, C, and E ideas into one clear paragraph.

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Check your response:

☐ I restated the question. ☐ I answered the question. ☐ I included text evidence.

☐ I explained my evidence.

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Name :.....Date:.....

5 | My Last Vacation: Plan

You may write about a trip, a holiday, a school break, or a memorable day at home.

1. Where did you go during your last vacation or school break?

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_____

2. Who was with you?

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3. What happened first?

_____

_____

4. What happened next?

_____

_____

5. What was the most memorable moment?

_____

_____

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Name :.....Date:.....

6. How did you feel, and why?

_____

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6 | My Last Vacation: Write

Write a personal narrative with a beginning, middle, and ending. Use time-order words such as first, later, after that, and finally.

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Checklist: [ ] Setting [ ] Events in order [ ] Feelings [ ] Ending [ ] Capitals and punctuation

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ANSWER KEY & SAMPLE RESPONSES ● Teacher copy

2 | Reading Comprehension — Answer Key

1. Maya and her family went to a campground beside a small lake near their town.
2. She was disappointed because she had hoped to visit a big city.
3. She learned how to paddle a canoe and steer it toward the dock.
4. They stayed inside their tent and played a guessing game.
5. She learned that an adventure does not have to happen far from home.

3 | Practice the RACE Strategy — Sample Responses

R — Restate: Maya's feelings about the trip changed over the weekend.

A — Answer: At first she felt disappointed, but by the end she appreciated the trip.

C — Cite: At the beginning, Maya had hoped to visit a big city. On the drive home, she said the trip had been better than she expected.

E — Explain: These details show that her experiences at the lake helped her change her mind about what makes a trip enjoyable.

4 | Write a Complete RACE Answer — Model Paragraph

Maya's feelings about the trip changed from disappointment to appreciation. At first, she was disappointed because she wanted to visit a big city. By the end, she told her mother that the trip had been better than she expected. This change shows that learning to paddle a canoe and spending time with her family helped her discover that an adventure can happen close to home.

5 | My Last Vacation: Plan — Sample Responses

1. I spent my school break at home and visited a nearby park.
2. I spent time with my grandmother and my younger sister.
3. First, we packed a picnic lunch and walked to the park.
4. Next, we ate lunch and played a ball game together.
5. My favorite moment was teaching my sister to catch the ball.
6. I felt proud and happy because we had fun together.

6 | My Last Vacation: Write — Model Personal Narrative

During my last school break, I stayed home and spent a sunny afternoon at a nearby park with my grandmother and younger sister. First, we packed sandwiches and fruit for a picnic. Then we walked to the park and found a shady place to sit. After lunch, we played a ball game. My sister could not catch the ball at first, so I showed her how to hold out her hands and watch it carefully. After a few tries, she caught it and smiled. I felt proud because I had helped her learn something new. Finally, we walked home together. I did not travel far during my break, but that afternoon became one of my favorite memories.

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