The *Narrative* High School Contest 2019–2020   
Open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Prompt:“The Choice”

Every day, we make hundreds of choices—some small, some life-changing. That’s where you come in. We’re living in a time when choices, both public and private, have a feeling of irrevocability, and for this year’s Fifth Annual *Narrative* “Tell Me a Story” High School Contest, we want to celebrate and mark the choices that shape our days, our years, and our lives. These choices may be subtle but distinct, humorous but evocative, daring and defining.

Write: In 600 words or less, write a personal essay or short story that depicts two or more characters faced with a compelling choice. Be sure the choice has consequences; show us the buildup (How did we get here?), the characters’ conflicted feelings and desires, and the resolution (if there is one). We’re looking for authentic stories—humorous or dramatic—that only you can write. Show us your world and a choice that defines it.

What else should I be sure to include in my story? We’re looking for personal narratives and works of short fiction that show how life can turn on a singular event. The moment itself may be small or large. We encourage you to focus on an action, a piece of dialogue, a character, or a question that truly resonates with you. We ask that you tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end. What led to the choice? What were the consequences? Why now? What next? In true *Narrative* fashion, tell us a story . . .

Winners will:

• Receive $1,000 in prizes and a chance to be published alongside great writers such as

Jhumpa Lahiri, Alice Munro, and Tobias Wolff.

• Participate in one-on-one mentorship from *Narrative* cofounder and editor and *New York*

*Times* bestselling author Carol Edgarian.

• Be featured in *Narrative’s* podcast, *Narrative Outloud*, and on *Narrative* social media

channels.

When: Entries are due **by February 28, 2019**. Submit to Ms. St. John as a .doc or a .docx file [lstjohn@newpaltz.k12.ny.us](mailto:lstjohn@newpaltz.k12.ny.us)

**What type of writing can I submit?**

We accept submissions of personal narratives or short stories. We strongly encourage you to

think beyond the traditional five-paragraph essay and explore different and creative ways of

crafting your narrative. Please refer to our video tutorials for more information on how to tell

your unique story.

**How should I format my personal narrative or short fiction?**

Contest narratives must be no more than 600 words and previously unpublished (anything

posted on your personal blog or website is not eligible). Manuscripts should be double-spaced

and in 12-point type, with one-inch margins and numbered pages. Your name, school, English

teacher, class period, and email address should be typed at the top of the first page.

**How do I submit my personal narrative or short fiction?**

Your English teacher will collect your submission as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx)

and submit it to Narrative on your behalf, no later than noon PST on February 28, 2020.

**What is the selection process like within each school?**

Participating students in each school will submit their personal narratives or short stories to

their English departments. Each school will nominate their school finalists, whose work will be

entered into the greater Narrative contest.

**How will the winners be chosen, and when will they be announced?**

All work submitted to the contest will be read blind—with names and schools removed and

entries sorted randomly—by *Narrative’s* experienced editorial team. Cofounder and editor Carol

Edgarian will select the three winners and will work directly with those authors to edit their

pieces for publication in *Narrative* and promotion on *Narrative* social media accounts. Winners

will be announced in early May 2020.

**What awards will the winners receive?**

The three winning works will be published on www.NarrativeMagazine.com, alongside many of

today’s most celebrated writers. The winning author will be presented with a $500 award. The

second-place winner will receive $200, and the third-place winner will receive $100. Each

finalist will receive $50.