

Teaching Tips

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What is Honors? Writing the Narrative

Writing narrative feedback can be challenging. After all, not all physicians like to write. There are, however, many reasons for writing a strong narrative. Below you will find several tips to enhance your narratives. And like every other skill, practice makes perfect.

Good

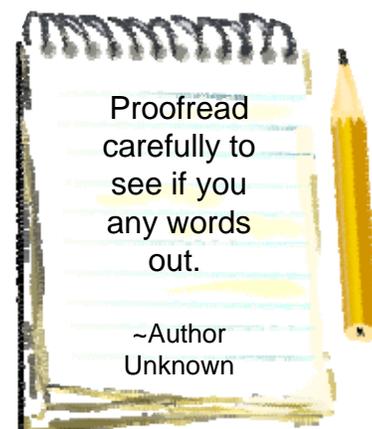
Ms. Snow White was a reliable and thoughtful student. Her clinical knowledge base was very good and her clinical judgment skills were also above her level in school. Snow took thorough histories and her physical exam skills seemed very good. Her oral presentations were organized and clear and she asked all necessary questions from the patients. Her note writing was good and her skills steadily improved through the rotation. All in all, Snow was interested, compassionate and a pleasure to work with.

There is no gold standard for writing performance narratives. Many suggestions to improve narratives parallel best practices in giving oral, constructive feedback.

- Add specific details --
- Include examples --
- Use descriptive adjectives --
- Avoid general statements --
- Include suggestions for improvement --

Better

Ms. Snow White's clinical knowledge base was very solid and her clinical judgment skills were above the level of a 3rd year student on her early rotations. She took coherent and thorough histories. She did a wonderful job relating and taking a sensitive psychosocial history from a 25 year old woman in an abusive relationship. Snow had excellent procedural skills and easily learned to perform a competent gyn exam. Her oral presentations were succinct but included all relevant information. Her notes were clear, legible and organized. She was punctual and thoughtful, helping wherever needed. Snow sought and accepted suggestions and feedback readily. One suggestion for improvement is to practice setting agendas with patients and redirecting the interview when appropriate. All in all, Snow was engaged in her learning, compassionate and a positive addition to our team.



Benefits of Writing Descriptive Narratives

- Educational value for students
- A foundation for letters of recommendation
- Helps site directors prepare the summative evaluation
- Discourages grade appeals