What is a narrative?

“A story with a beginning... middle... end.”
Want more?

“A piece of writing characterized by a main character in a setting who encounters a problem or engages in an interesting, significant, or entertaining activity or experience.”
Want even more?

✓ Clear, well-developed characters & characterization
✓ Scenes
✓ Engaging dialog (including internal dialog)
✓ Telling detail
✓ Themes
✓ Imagery, symbolism and metaphor
✓ Writer’s voice
Having some trouble picturing that?
The Crucial Story Arc
The Story Diamond Key

[Diagram showing the structure of a story with various stages and labels such as 'First Image', 'Theme Stated', 'Act 1A', 'Act 1B', 'Act 2A', 'Act 2B', 'Act 3A', 'Act 3B', 'Prologue', 'Dénouement', 'Theme', 'Moral Premise Statement (MPS)', 'Change characters gradually not suddenly.']
From Cinderella and Romeo and Juliet to the stories of Oedipus and Icarus, almost every story conforms to one of just six plots, researchers have claimed. The six in order: Rise, Fall-rise, Rise-fall-rise, Fall, Rise-fall-rise, Fall-rise-fall.
The Shape of Stories
Kurt Vonnegut
The Shape of Stories
Kurt Vonnegut
“Structure has preoccupied me in every project.”

~ John McPhee
“This is the New Yorker, so you can use any narrative structure you like. Just know that when I get it, I’m going to take it apart and make it all chronological.”

Dan Baum
My short career at the New Yorker.
danbaum.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/new-yorker-tweets.pdf
“Telling a story in strict chronological order turned out to be a fabulous discipline.

It made the story easy to write, and may be why New Yorker stories are so easy to read.”

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