

General Structure of Slave Narratives

The following are four structural components that are generally found in slave narratives. [As you watch the video on Henry “Box” Brown](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNaGntepGhU) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNaGntepGhU>) and read excerpts from his narrative, look for each of these four components.

Precipitating Event

The precipitating event or “straw that broke the camel’s back” is an event that occurred that motivated the person to run away.

Path of Escape

The path of escape is usually provided in slave narratives. It gives information about the escape route including where the slave began and where he/she was heading (if known).

Events along the Way

The events along the way are often provided in slave narratives. These are the events that occurred while the slave was on the path of escape. These could be positive things that happened to help the slave in his/her escape or negative things that provided obstacles to the escape. They are the dramatic details of escape that make the escape interesting and keep us wanting to know if the runaway made it to freedom.

Result

Slave narratives often include the result of the runaway attempt. They usually describe their arrival at their destination and their life in freedom.