

Telling v. *Showing*

TELLING

SHOWING

Showing I was nervous.	My palms were sweaty. I popped my knuckles. I looked in my backpack three times for no reason. My leg kept shaking, and I turned my head to look at the clock every few seconds.
She was angry.	“She kicked open the screen door, letting it slam against the wall as she dashed outside. Down the steps and into the yard she flew. Grabbing the first rock in her path, she hurled it back toward the house. It crashed through the living room window with an explosion of shattered glass.” (Marion Dane Bauer, <i>What’s Your Story</i>)
My sister is talented.	My sister competes in weightlifting championships, sings lead vocals in a rock band, and speaks five languages.

How to SHOW:

- Examine the 5 senses
- Use figurative language
- Use precise diction
- Try some narrative techniques: dialogue, monologue, nonverbal language

DIRECTIONS: Read these examples of descriptions that create images and generate emotions in the reader. Underline or highlight the parts you think really SHOW. Then answer the question after each paragraph.

1. “Whenever puppies in the pet store window distracted me from our walk, Fido flattened his scruffy ears, growling. But he always forgave me. As his sight faded, the smell of fresh air and the feel of grass would make him try to caper. Eventually, at the sound of my voice, his tail thumped weakly on the ground. This morning, I filled his water bowl all the way to the top—just the way he likes it—before I remembered.”

What are the main ideas, emotions, and impressions that you get from these descriptions?

2. "When the recess bell rang, I grabbed my chess set and dashed to freedom, eager to win the daily tournament of outcasts. I didn't look, but I knew Lucinda was watching. I could feel her curly locks swaying as her head tracked me. Of course, I tripped in the doorway. Tennis shoes and sandals stepped around me as I scrambled after pawns and bishops. And there was Lucinda, waiting for me to notice her. She smiled, lifted her shiny patent-leather shoe, and slowly, carefully ground her heel right on the head of my white queen."

(examples from Jerz's Literacy Weblog, <http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative1/showing/>)

What are the main ideas, emotions, and impressions that you get from these descriptions?

DIRECTIONS: Choose 2 of the "telling" sentences below, and use the strategies listed and modeled in the previous sections to make them "show" instead.

1. The man was dressed unusually.
2. My room needed cleaning.
3. The roller coaster ride was scary.
4. Gabriel's cooking was not great.
