

# Writing Mini-Lesson

Show, Don't Tell!

**Tell:** to explain in a matter-of-fact way without giving the reader anything to visualize

**EX:** *The trip was fun.*

**Show:** to use language in a crafty way that gives the reader something concrete to visualize

**EX:** *I had a blast dancing to the loud reggae music as my friends trashed the hotel room with soda bottles and popcorn on the last night of our Spring Break trip.*

**SHOW YOUR READER WHAT YOUR WRITING SAYS!**

- 1. Sue is the girl who deserves the Class Clown Award.
- 2. Winston's oozing ulcer dripped a yellowish fluid onto his otherwise grey sock.
- 3. Mr. Smith is a very good English teacher.

**Does the statement SHOW or TELL?**

- 4. The suspicious man kept one hand in his pocket as he lurked near the cashier with a baseball cap pulled down over his eyes.
- 5. The color of the drunken man's teeth reminded me of a piano as he grinned widely for the news reporter.

**Does the statement SHOW or TELL?**

- 6. The poem that we read yesterday is the best poem I've ever read.
- 7. The storm that cut through town a few days ago was a very destructive storm.

**Does the statement SHOW or TELL?**

- I could hardly wait until my mom came home from the hospital with the new baby. The baby was cute.
- How can the writer SHOW the baby instead of TELLING that she is cute?

**Show, Don't Tell!**

- Melissa has big bright eyes, straight black hair, and soft skin. She has rosy cheeks too. Her fingers and toes are tiny, and her clothes aren't much bigger than a doll's fashionable outfit.

**Show, Don't Tell!**

- Please shut your eyes while I read this sentence to you:
- Mavis was angry when she heard what the umpire said.
- What does that look like?

**Show, Don't Tell!**



- Please shut your eyes again and listen to this sentence:
- Shaking her head back and forth, Mavis pounded home plate with her fist after the umpire shouted, "You're out!"
- Now what picture do you have in your head?

**Show, Don't Tell!**

- Strategies writers use to SHOW what is happening include the following:
  - describing actions rather than just saying how he or she feels
  - using action verbs
  - using similes and metaphors
  - appealing to some of the five senses to paint a picture of what is happening
  - using rhetorical devices including pathos, ethos, and logos

**Show, Don't Tell**

1. Desiree is always chosen last when we pick kickball teams at recess. People say that she is too sensitive to play.

**ADD TWO MORE SENTENCES ON YOUR PAPER THAT SHOW THE UNDERLINED PART OF THE PASSAGE.**

**NOW YOU TRY IT!**

- 2. The book we are reading in English class has an interesting protagonist. This character certainly has some unique problems.

**ADD TWO MORE SENTENCES ON YOUR PAPER THAT SHOW THE UNDERLINED PART OF THE PASSAGE.**

3. One of the best things about Buford High School is all of the ways students can participate in activities outside the classroom.

**ADD TWO MORE SENTENCES ON YOUR PAPER THAT SHOW THE UNDERLINED PART OF THE PASSAGE.**

4. The highlight of my summer happened one weekend.

**ADD TWO MORE SENTENCES ON YOUR PAPER THAT SHOW THE UNDERLINED PART OF THE PASSAGE.**

5. One thing about high school that I'll always remember is the memories we create at my lunch table.

**ADD TWO MORE SENTENCES ON YOUR PAPER THAT SHOW THE UNDERLINED PART OF THE PASSAGE.**