

Showing, Not Telling

Descriptive details—examples, facts, feelings, and quotations—can help you *show* your ideas instead of *tell* about them in your writing. Writing that simply *tells* gives the basic information, but writing that *shows* will make that information more vivid.

Writing on Your Own You can improve all kinds of writing, from speeches to friendly letters, by adding details that *show*, instead of *tell*. Below are some examples to help you.

Telling a Feeling	Rob liked the scarf I gave him.
Showing a Feeling	Rob wore the plaid scarf I gave him every day, whether it was cold or not.
Telling About a Character	Jay's life revolved around baseball.
Showing a Character	Jay threw pitches every morning for a half hour. After school, he went to varsity baseball practice. At night, he hit balls with his dad.
Telling About an Event	The party was a success.
Showing an Event	People danced, talked, and ate all night. By the end of the party, the food and drink tables were bare.
Telling About an Idea	People who walk to work or school in the winter face many hazards.
Showing an Idea	After slipping on icy sidewalks, getting drenched at slushy curbs, and shivering in bone-chilling winds, why would anyone walk to work or school in the winter?

Responding to Literature When you write a response to a piece of literature, you can *tell* your interpretations of events or characters as long as you use specific examples, reasons, and quotations from the text to *show* how you arrived at that conclusion.

Telling { In the poem "since feeling is first," E. E. Cummings suggests that feelings are more important than logic.

Showing { He writes: "the best gesture of my brain is less than / your eyelids' flutter which says / we are for each other."