

Show, Don't Tell

5th and 6th Grade Writing

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What do you think?

○ Paragraph A:

○ Carter was sick of living a lie. She was sad and angry. So, she slammed her bedroom door.

○ Paragraph B:

○ “I’m tired of pretending!” Carter shouted, tears streaming down her face, before slamming the door behind her.

○ Which paragraph do you think is a better example of descriptive writing? Why?

Paragraph A

- Carter told Rose that she was sick of living a lie. She was sad and angry. So, she slammed her bedroom door.

Paragraph B

- “I’m tired of pretending!”
Carter shouted, tears streaming down her face, before slamming the mahogany door behind her.

What is “Show Don’t Tell?”

- “Show Don’t Tell” is a technique that writers use to help make their writing descriptive.
- Descriptive writing paints a picture for your readers.
 - The sky is blue.
 - The sky above was the color of a robin’s egg and littered with fluffy white clouds.

Ways to Show

- Use **sensory language**:
 - Sensory words take hold of a reader's senses
 - 5 Senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
 - Words like dazzling, melodious, rough, bitter, or pungent
- Use **strong action verbs**:
 - Strong action verbs have a greater impact on your reader.
 - Don't say dislike. Use abhor, avoid, condemn, or detest.
 - Don't say love. Use admire, adore, or cherish.
 - Don't say run. Use dart, dash, or scurry.

Practice: Rewrite these options in your notes.

SHOW me what happened!

- Option A: Peter ran to meet Marcus. It had been a long time since they had seen each other. Peter was very happy to see Marcus again.
- Option B: The grass was green and tall. Sarah told Liza that she thought the flowers were pretty.
- Option C: Reginald was an old man and tripped down the stairs because he was running to see Liza. Marcus is mean, so he laughed.