

Showing Versus Telling

When writing essays or stories, we can describe people's behavior, events, and, especially emotions, by either **telling** or **showing**.

For example, if I wanted to say that Jim felt cold I could write it in two different ways:

- Telling: "Jim felt cold."
- Showing: "Jim shivered and wished he had worn more layers of clothing."

Identification

Telling (indirect) vs. showing (direct)

Exercise: Identify whether these different sentences use the direct or indirect point of view.

1. I walked out of my exam and I felt triumphant.
 2. I walked out of my exam, grinning from ear to ear.
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1. When I bit into the chocolate bar, I heard a choir of angels sing.
 2. I love chocolate.
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1. I was sad when my puppy died.
 2. I collapsed into tears when my puppy died.

Comprehension

Exercise: Match the sentence with the corresponding emotion or characteristic.

Note: They are not in order.

Satisfaction

Disappointment

Courage

Anger

Jealousy

Optimism

Friendliness

Indifference

1. Rosa slumped back in her seat and yawned as the band played their grand finale.
2. David was disappointed when his favorite team lost the last game of the season.
3. When Taylor grabbed Sam's pen from his hand, Sam's face clouded over and his eyes flashed darkly.
4. Despite the opposing team's pitcher's infamous fastball, Tim stepped to the plate with his jaw clenched and his bat at the ready.
5. Manny's birthday was next week and he anticipated he'd get a new iPod.
6. When Ally saw Carrie standing alone at the party, she enthusiastically called her over and introduced her to all her friends.
7. Jane was very content after eating a delicious turkey dinner.
8. The valet glared at the rich movie star as he drove off in his shiny red convertible.

Exercise: Determine whether the previous sentences demonstrate showing or telling and then convert them into the other (i.e.: a sentence that used showing, you should convert it to telling).

Use

Exercise: Write a sentence that tells how you felt at a specific moment in your life, and then write a sentence that shows how you felt at a specific moment in your life (the same moment you used for the last sentence).