

Showing, Not Telling

Interesting and lively writing doesn't just tell about things in general terms. Instead, it shows readers something through descriptive details – examples, facts, feelings, and quotations. Below are some examples.

Telling a Feeling	Alicia is jealous of her older sister.
Showing a Feeling	Alicia turns red and stomps to her room when she thinks that her parents are paying more attention to her sister than to her.
Telling About a Character	Marty was a good student.
Showing a Character	Marty studied for three hours each day and scored high on every test he took.
Telling About an Event	Philip scored two points.
Showing an Event	Philip dribbled past an oncoming player and jumped high to score two points with a perfect lay-up.
Telling About an Idea	I always get sleepy at the movies.
Showing an Idea	Sitting in a movie theater makes me sleepy because the seats are cushiony and the room is dark.

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 The purse snatcher in the story "Thank You, M'am" falls down and is caught during his getaway.

Showing After ripping the heavy shoulder bag from a lady's shoulder, he buckles under the weight and falls back. His legs fly up, and the lady kicks him in the behind.