

Telling Showing

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| ☆ Summarizes key points | ☆ Recreates experience (brings it to life) |
| ☆ Contains few specific details | ☆ Uses carefully chosen sensory details |
| ☆ Tends to use vague words and "to be" verbs (is, am, are, was, were) | ☆ Uses powerful verbs and nouns that are specific & interesting |
| ☆ Ranges from vaguely interesting to b-o-r-i-n-g! | ☆ Engages reader's senses and emotions (draws them into the experiences) |
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Writing can become more interesting when descriptive techniques (showing vs. telling) are used that help the reader feel they are participating in an experience. Below are examples of moving from the general to the specific, from the boring to the fascinating:

I was **tired**...feeling lassitude...feeling like crashing on the couch, armed with my remote and a bowl popcorn to spend a rainy afternoon watching old movies on TBS.

The skiing was **really great**...all powder...like gliding through a sea of powder...exhilaration exploding through my frame, leaving me intoxicated, desiring more.

It was **fun** to swim with fish...a new experience...a memorable experience...Before I scuba dive, I anticipated my experience to be something like swimming in a big aquarium; however, what happened was more like exploring an alien planet,

complete with weightlessness, a "poisonous" atmosphere, and exotic creatures.

Here are a few examples of **SHOWING** from Jon Krakauer's Into Thin Air:

As I waited for Rob to lead the way, the ice underfoot emitted a series of loud cracking noises, **like small trees being snapped in two**, and I felt myself wince with each pop and rumble from the glacier's shifting depths.

As the glacier moved, crevasses would sometimes **compress, buckling ladders like toothpicks**.

The sick Sherpa had so much fluid in his lungs, he recalled, "that **when he breathed it sounded like a straw slurping a milkshake from the bottom of a glass.**"

Your turn: Choose two sentences below. Revise the statement by writing three or four sentences that express the idea in more detail without using the underlined words.

Her perfume stinks.

The fly was annoying.

It was fun to go to the mall.

The weather was great.

I was afraid.

I was tired.

The skiing was really great.