

Don't Tell Everything, Show Your Readers



PURPOSE

Revises bland "telling" sentences that use overly general words into "showing" sentences full of specific, enlightening details.

Before Example

My room is a mess.

Revision Tips

- 1 Brainstorm a mini-list of what a person might find in your bedroom to include in showing sentences.
- 2 Weave three to four ideas into one to two sentences.

Brainstorm Box

- broken cookies, popcorn, ants
- sweaty socks
- cards, board-game parts on floor
- homework

After Example

On patches of my room's wooden floor, tiny black ants feasted on chocolate cookie crumbs and stray pieces of buttered popcorn. A deck of cards and parts of board games teeter-tottered atop mounds of shorts, t-shirts, jeans, sneakers, and stiff, dirty socks.

Get Students Involved

Ask: Why is showing more effective than telling? [showing with specific details paints a picture for readers; engages readers by involving their five senses; allows reader to draw his own conclusions] Why is taking the time to brainstorm helpful? Can you rewrite this paragraph another way?

Student 3 Activity

Directions: Choose one telling sentence in each activity and rewrite it after you've brainstormed four to five ideas.

Activity 3

- 1 My sister/brother/cousin is a pain.
- 2 The pond feels slimy.

Rewrite: _____

Activity 3A

- 1 The store owner was mean.
- 2 The attic felt spooky.

Rewrite: _____
