Help students learn about descriptive writing with this engaging lesson. Your class will learn to show character emotions through the “show, don’t tell” writing technique with videos, practice writing, and class participation.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will understand the importance of showing, not telling in their writing. Students will be able to show details, instead of telling them, in their writing.

**Materials and Preparation**

- Computer
- Notebooks (one per student)
- Student writing pieces (one per student; needing edits)
- Interactive white board/Projector
- Access to the Internet
- Short Video clips with examples of people displaying intense emotions.

**Key Terms:**

- Show, Don’t Tell

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Lesson

Introduction  *(5 minutes)*

1. Introduce the lesson to your students. Start by activating prior knowledge that the students may have of the “show, don’t tell” strategy. For example, ask how many students make pictures in their heads while they read.
2. Then, ask students what words help them paint a picture in their mind. Once a student answers correctly, or a few students made guesses, explain that the writer helps paint this picture with descriptive words, that show readers what is happening, instead of telling them.
3. Explaining that the phrase “show, don’t tell” refers to a writing strategy that is used to give descriptions of character’s emotions.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling  *(10 minutes)*

- Explain that while looking at your students’ writing, you often see sentences such as, “I was happy” and “I was nervous.” These are examples of “telling” the reader how you (or the character) is feeling, instead of “showing” it.
- Tell the class that when writers “show” a feeling, readers can create more accurate and vivid pictures in their minds.
- Pull up a few sample videos, and tell the class that they’re going to watch the clips, and describe how a person is feeling based on how they act and look. Good examples include Nicki Minaj Sings 'Super Bass' with Sophia Grace by The Ellen Show, Lily’s Disney Surprise! by KAftC, and Epic Roller Coaster Fail @ Disney California Adventure by Ray Valverde.
- It’s critical that they pay close attention to what each person does—they will need to remember the actions that determine how the person is feeling.
- Show video clips to the class, and have students write down actions from the videos and their reactions in their notebooks.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling  *(5 minutes)*

- Tell the students they will fix their own writing.
- Model an example for the class before students start their individual work. Start by writing a sentence that “tells” on the board. For example, write the sentence “She was excited.”
- Ask the class to fix this sentence to “show” the subject is excited, using the words or phrases they wrote down from the video clip.

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Independent Working Time (20 minutes)

- Once the students have fixed the sentence as a class, tell the class to edit their own narrative writing pieces (written prior to this lesson) to “show” things.

Extend

Differentiation

- **Enrichment**: Challenge students who are above level to work on word choices during individual conferences, and to use similes and metaphors in their work.
- **Support**: Arrange students into a small group, and create a “jot list” of possible words that help writers show, instead of telling. Some possible words include: happy: my mouth widened with a smile; I jumped up and down.

Review

Assessment (20 minutes)

- Review how students have used and applied the strategy to their writing pieces.

Review and Closing (5 minutes)

- Have students share how they have edited their own narrative writing.
- Good writers, today and everyday, will show, not tell, how characters feel.