

## Narrative Writing Tutorial

*A nicely detailed narrative shows the reader the details of the setting, characters, events, etc, rather than telling the reader about them. Now, how exactly do you as a writer achieve this method of "showing" versus "telling"? You include the following:*

### **Let the reader see it by including strong adjectives and adverbs:**

#### **Example 1:**

**Tell:** She loved kids and she was also close to her husband. She was clumsy and often forgetful. She was also a driven person at work.

**Show:** Yet, at the end of the finger-painting messes with the kids, 'project plans' stress, and losing her wedding ring for the umpteenth time, she always made time to have date nights with her husband - her rock.

#### **Example 2:**

**Tell:** She was a kind person who helped many people

**Show:** Whether is was helping at a soup kitchen, the community center or even helping out a homeless person with a few cents, she always felt the desire to be helping someone.

#### **Example 3:**

**Tell:** Bob felt scared

**Show:** Bob's face went ashen. His breath came in ragged gasps.

#### **Example 4:**

**Tell:** The house was old

**Show:** The house slouched in a yard choked with weeds, its paint faded and flaking, the lace curtains in the windows yellowed with age.

**Now, it is your turn to rewrite the following sentence, adding details to allow your reader to see the character:**

**Tell:** The man was well-dressed

**Show:**

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**Tell:** He was well-liked and gave to charities.

**Show:**

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## Use Strong Verb Choice

**Consider the sentence:** Daniel **walked** down the street.

It gives the basics, but it is bland. By using more descriptive verbs, you help to show how he walked:

Daniel **ambled** down the street.

Daniel **strutted** down the street.

Daniel **slunk** down the street, head lowered.

How does the verb choice change the image in your mind?

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Now, you try it, using different verbs in place of "wrote":

Ethel wrote her name on the line:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Write Expressive Dialogue to show character's emotions, attitudes, and personalities

The content of dialogue, too, is a useful “showing” tool. It can give readers insight into a character’s intelligence and level of sophistication, can hint at his background, and even suggest something about his self-image.

If you want a character to seem intelligent, let her say intelligent things. If a man’s not well educated, keep his vocabulary comparatively simple. If you want someone to be irate with another person, show this through their dialogue with that other person.

### Example:

Why simply tell your reader that Wanda is snobby and that others are nervous around her? Show them through dialogue:

“Once again,” Wanda said, sighing, “I had to tell her that if she wants to sit with us at lunch, she better start wearing designer jeans.”

"Does she really have to wear designer jeans? I mean, she is pretty nice," Maria asked, shyly.

"Seriously, Maria? Sometimes I wonder if you even should even be sitting with us."

"No, I do. I do agree. I just thought meant, you know, we don't wear designer jeans every day..."

Maria trailed off.

