

Crafting Atmosphere: Show, Don't Tell

Learning objective: To improve descriptive writing by replacing 'telling' sentences with 'showing' sentences that evoke the senses.

Max the monkey is writing a story about a mysterious rainforest, but he is only 'telling' the reader what is happening! Use the 'Show, Don't Tell' technique to rewrite his sentences. Instead of saying how a character feels or what the weather is like, describe the actions, sounds, or visual details that prove it. Use words from the bank to help you build your imagery.

Word bank: damp · rustle · shiver · shimmering · dense · fragrance · canopy · hollow · echo · humid

1. Max wrote: 'The jungle was very scary.' Rewrite this using sensory details (what can be heard or felt?) to 'show' the atmosphere. (2 marks)

2. Max wrote: 'The explorer was nervous.' Describe the character's physical actions (hands, breathing, eyes) to 'show' their nervousness without using the word. (2 marks)

3. Max wrote: 'It was a hot day.' Describe the air, the plants, or the effect of the heat on the environment to 'show' the temperature. (2 marks)

4. Max wrote: 'The old treasure chest looked valuable.' Describe the details of the chest (material, light, texture) to 'show' its worth. (2 marks)

5. Create your own 'Show, Don't Tell' sentence for: 'The forest floor was full of life.' Focus on small movements or hidden creatures. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene inspired by one of your rewritten sentences. Include at least three specific details you described in your writing, such as shadows, specific plants, or the texture of an object.



Extension challenge: Choose a paragraph from a book you are currently reading. Identify one sentence where the author 'tells' the reader something. Rewrite that sentence using the 'Show, Don't Tell' method to make it more descriptive.