

Lesson Skill: Elaborating with showing, not telling

Strand Writing

SOL 6.7, 6.8

7.7, 7.8

8.7, 8.8

Materials

- Copies of the attached Telling Sentences cut into strips
- Chart paper
- Markers

Lesson

1. Before the students enter the room, write the sentence, “The teacher is angry.” on the board. When the students enter the room, act angry: storm across the room, slam the door, drop a book on the floor, glare at the class—whatever you can do to convince them that you really are angry without saying anything. Include small things like tapping a pencil against the desk, tapping your foot, etc.
2. Ask the students to write down how they know you are angry. Then, ask them to share their responses, and list the responses on the board. Make sure they have included everything.
3. Ask the students to describe the difference between showing and telling, as made clear in the warm-up activity. Ask them why showing is usually more effective than telling. Which will they remember this afternoon—the sentence on the board or the way you were behaving?
4. As a class, use their descriptions of your behaviors demonstrating anger to write a strong paragraph that “shows” that you were angry. Point out that vivid vocabulary, selected information, and tone and voice are the things that make “showing” sentences effective.
5. If another example is needed, model the transformation of the following “telling” sentence into a “showing” paragraph: “The girl was happy when she won the contest.”
6. Place students in groups of three, and have each group draw one of the attached “Telling Sentences” strips. Have each group turn their sentence into a “showing paragraph” by using vivid vocabulary, rich details, and appropriate tone and voice. When each group is satisfied with their paragraph, have them write the original “telling” sentence and their “showing” paragraph on a piece of chart paper to post for all to see.
7. Have each group present their work to the class.

8. Have students complete an exit slip on which they turn the following “telling” sentence into a “showing” paragraph: “I am excited when the class is over.”

Strategies for differentiation

- In preparation for this lesson, find a variety of video clips (with no sound).
- Play the clips and ask the students to write down what behavior is being shown.
- The students should then support their response by explaining how they know that was the behavior in the video clip.
- Give the students a behavior written on a notecard. Have each student act out the behavior on the card. The rest of the class will guess the behavior and write down how they reached that conclusion.

Telling Sentences

The basketball game was the most exciting one of the season.

The lost little girl looked very frightened.

The new student tried to get his locker open, but he was not successful.

The girl looked embarrassed when she fell in the gym.

The man was happy when he won the lottery.

The boy was nervous when he was called to the office.

The team members celebrated when they made a touchdown in the last 15 seconds of play.

The girls were surprised by the noise and activity at the concert.

The mother was angry at her daughter for arriving home two hours after curfew.

The bus driver punished everyone on the bus for the misbehavior.
