

What will your writing do?

Show or Tell



Showing

Writing that brings stories to life

Gray smoke billowed skyward, adding soot to the diesel fumes of the I-5 freeway. Smog slowly darkened the sun. That was Los Angeles in the 1970s.

- ✓ Describe
- ✓ Narrate

What is it?

What does it help me do?

Telling

Writing that presents information

Air near Los Angeles in the 1970s was heavily polluted. That's because surrounding mountains held in the smog.

- ✓ Explain
- ✓ Inform
- ✓ Examine
- ✓ Analyze

Details that show ...

- Sights
- Sounds
- Smells
- Tastes
- Textures
- Dialogue

Details that tell ...

- Facts
- Statistics
- Examples
- Definitions
- Reasons
- Comparisons

What type of writing relies on it?

- ✓ Narratives
- ✓ Stories
- ✓ Poems
- ✓ Fantasies

- ✓ Explanatory Essays
- ✓ Reports
- ✓ Articles
- ✓ News Stories

When should my writing use showing?

To describe something more vividly
To present important scenes and descriptions

To add drama
To make readers feel a part of a story

Telling:

Jill was scared.

Showing:

Jill's eyes widened, and sweat dripped from her brow. She covered her mouth to dull her scream.

When should my writing use telling?

To supply information and ideas
To cut wordiness

To move stories along
To help readers learn

Unspecific:

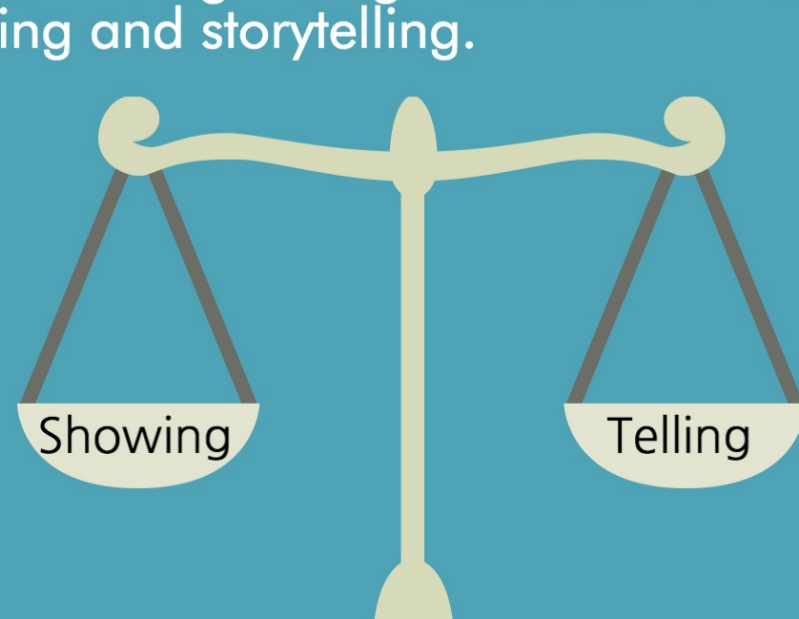
The Pacific Ocean is really big.

Specific:

The Pacific Ocean is bigger than all the continents put together.

Can I use both showing and telling in my writing?

Absolutely! Finding the right balance is the key to great writing and storytelling.



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