Writing Workshop Practice Exercises

Show Don't Tell

Helping the Reader to Experience the Story

Made by Liesl
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Show Don't Tell: Helping the Reader to Experience the Story

Some sentences are downright boring.

- She was happy.
- He went to the store.
- It was a good day.

You can provide much more detail to help the reader imagine what is happening. Imagine the specific details of the scene so the reader can almost visualize, hear, smell and feel that world. You want the reader to feel as if they are right there, experiencing the story with the descriptions, actions, thoughts and feelings.

Describe someone who is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>angry</th>
<th>sad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

List interesting and descriptive images of the following characters:

- Rumpelstiltskin
- Hagrid from *Harry Potter*
What kinds of details help people to form mental images in their minds?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Describe the scene when Cinderella arrives at the ball. Be descriptive!

________________________________________________________________________

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Describe how the scene when Hansel was tricked by the witch and was locked in a cage. In this paragraph really show what Hansel was thinking and feeling at that moment.

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________________________________________________________________________
Don’t be too obvious when you write. Try to build interest and suspense as you write by adding details that make people think. Describe the situation without stating it outright. Paint a picture to help the reader imagine the scene, describe what is going on, show the person’s emotional reactions, and so forth.

Describe your encounter with Bigfoot.

_____________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                   
_____________________________________________________________________________
                                                                                   
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

The words we choose when we are writing can be exciting or hum-drum. Use the space below to describe someone’s feelings. I’ve provided some “boring” options. Now you should brainstorm and find some better choices that show a wide range of feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Emotions</th>
<th>Negative Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>happy, glad,</td>
<td>sad, angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jubilant</td>
<td>fussy, perplexed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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They were afraid.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

The house was shabby.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

He felt very sad.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

There was a bad storm

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

She was sick.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
We hurried to the hospital.

I had a bad day.

They went to the store.

It was hot.

There was a drought.
List some descriptive sensory words for each of the 5 senses:

**Sight**


**Sound**


**Taste**


**Smell**


**Touch**


Sample Answers

Describe someone who is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Sad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>red in the face</td>
<td>sobbing, crying,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pursed lips</td>
<td>splotched face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frowning</td>
<td>watery eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eyebrows touching</td>
<td>runny nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrow eyes</td>
<td>trembling lip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seething</td>
<td>hanging head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seething</td>
<td>sniffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gritting their teeth</td>
<td>red eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clenched fists</td>
<td>bloodshot eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breathing heavily</td>
<td>shoulders drooped</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What kinds of details help people to form mental images in their minds?

- Color
- Size
- Age
- Weight
- Shape
- Condition
- Texture

What did you see? Hear? Smell? Taste? Feel?
What expression did they have?
What was he wearing?
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>happy, glad</td>
<td>sad, angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jubilant, invigorated, exuberant, cheerful, ecstatic, overjoyed, proud, relaxed, empowered, calm, appreciated, honored, protected, secure, upbeat, elated, blissful, perky, thrilled, peaceful, chipper,</td>
<td>fussy, perplexed, trapped, upset, worn-out, stressed, morose, overwhelmed, insecure, irritated, betrayed, chastised, agitated, hostile, stubborn, hopeless, humiliated, bereft, crushed, depressed, out-of-control, vulnerable, hesitant, disappointed, grave, troubled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sight**

Bright, dark, hazy, light, straight, translucent, striped, etc.

**Sound**

Bleating, braying, chiming, jangling, roaring, spluttering, splashing, growling, howling, screeching, wailing, whinnying, croaking, sobbing

**Taste**

Sour, bitter, dry, salty, stale, spoiled, juicy, sweet, tangy, fishy, chocolatey, spicy,

**Smell**

Rotten, dank, new, musty, pungent, putrid, smoky, strong, woody, rainy, decayed, earthy, mildewy

**Touch**

Sandy, sticky, rough, smooth, gooey, glassy, gritty, puffy, soft, slimy, flexible, steamy, velvety,
You might be interested in some of our Spelling Games and Word Sort Activities:

**Spelling Activities**

- **Long A Sounds /ay/ – a, ai, ay, a-e, ei, eigh, ey** – Sorting Cards and Board

  ![](https://homeschoolden.com/images/little-a-game.png)

  *Game!*

- **ow ou oy oi aw au** Word Sort Activities


- **-er Sound Spelling Printable**

  ![](https://homeschoolden.com/images/er-sound.png)
Check our free grammar worksheets at this page: Language Arts Resources over at homeschoolden.com

Various free grammar worksheets available.