



Step 5: Show, Don't Tell

SEVEN STEPS WRITING TIPS

Series One

Our job as writers is to create pictures in the brains of our readers. That's what 'Show, Don't Tell' is all about. For instance:-

Tell: *My brother is lazy.*

Show: *'Your turn for the dishes Tank,' said Mum.*

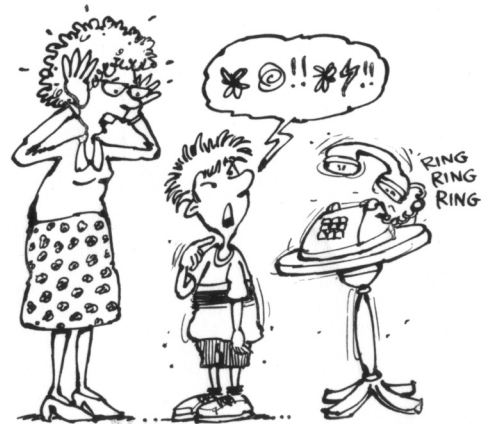
'Yeah, later,' he said yawning and turned the TV louder.

'No, now,' said Mum. She stood in the doorway, arms crossed. She knew later in Tank's mind meant somewhere between the year 2012 and infinity. Once, as punishment, Mum put all the dishes and saucepans Tank had forgotten on top of his bed. He just dumped them on the floor. A week later they were still there, a shoe in the spaghetti sauce, sweaty socks on the plates and a really bad smell wafting out the door.

Ah, now we 'see' it. It takes much longer to write, but our readers are far more convinced.

TOP TIP:

Ask kids to 'prove' important things. e.g. What tells you Jake is a great friend? Answer: He ate the biscuits I cooked that tasted like wet cement. Write that scene to really convince your reader.



ACTION ACTIVITY:

Test with your kids how words form pictures in our minds. Slowly read these:-

- Red flowers stand tall and cheerful in a vase.
- There's a baby elephant under the tree in our garden.

© Jen McVeity, author and National Literacy Champion

Get more writing techniques and activities:

www.sevenstepswriting.com

Email: office@sevenstepswriting.com

Phone: (61-3) 9521 8439

seven steps

TO WRITING SUCCESS