



Show - Don't Tell



The Children of the King

by Sonya Hartnett

Writers often make a story more interesting by **showing** their readers what is happening, rather than **telling** them. They describe what the characters see, smell, feel, hear, taste or do. This is a good **technique** to use when you write a **narrative text**. Here are some great examples written by Sonya Hartnett in *The Children of the King*.

Telling Tell the reader what happened...	Showing (from <i>The Children of the King</i>) Show how the characters felt, what they did, saw, heard...
Jeremy was in a bad mood.	Jeremy folded into a chair, radiating sourness. (p. 13)
Some children were talking happily and others were upset.	Some were chatting like parrots, casting grins here and there; others were sobbing into handkerchiefs knotted in their palms. (p. 21)
The car drove up the carriageway to Heron Hall.	The nicest sound was the crunch of gravel beneath tyres as the car swept onto the carriageway of Heron Hall. (p. 39)
Cecily thought it was funny.	Cecily giggled so much she had to cover her mouth. (p. 52)
The girls walked up to the castle with their dog.	Side by side the girls and the hound pushed through the grass, edging between the heaps of stone until the castle loomed above them, and they stopped. (p. 83-84)
There was a crowd of people.	Lads laughed, babies cried, women haggled, shop-bells rang. (p. 99)
The girls looked at books in the library.	The girls moved like moths from shelf to shelf, alighting here and there to draw a book from between its fellows. (p.135)

Now it's your turn. Use your senses and think about what you would have seen, heard, felt, tasted, smelt or done in these situations. Write one or two sentences to show what happened.

Telling Tell the reader what happened...	Showing Show how the characters felt, what they did, saw, heard...
 The girls were excited to be at Ruby's birthday party.	
The guard dog watched the burglar sneak into the yard. 	
It was hot and the beach was crowded with people. 	
The children were noisy while they waited to go into the classroom. 	