



Module Four

Task: Show don't tell

One of the most important writing techniques is show don't tell.

Imagine a stage. On the stage, are actors and a set. Beside the actors, is a narrator. If the actors stood statically on stage while the narrator told us what was happening, how everyone felt, etc, this would be **told**. Get rid of the narrator, and get the characters talking, moving, and emoting. That is **show**.

When you show the story through action, you leave space for the reader to emote on the character's behalf.

Ways to show rather than tell include:

- using illustrations
- leave things unsaid; let the reader draw their own conclusions
- use physical experiences and actions to convey feeling
- only write **action**. Avoid description wherever possible.

1. Think about the experience of feeling nervous. Observe how this is experienced in your body. What actions do you do when you are nervous?
2. Rewrite the following sentence without using the word 'nervous', or any other feeling word: *Tara felt nervous about starting school*. Tip: Put Tara into a scene and use her physical actions to convey nervousness. What does Tara see, feel, smell, do etc.?
3. Identify the key emotion your own character experiences in both the beginning and the end of the story. Use show don't tell techniques to demonstrate the feeling in a scene.

