examples **Show, don’t tell**

We (teachers and readers) are tired of hearing the same old words! Spice up your work with descriptive language. Find words that intrigue and stimulate our senses, instead of using words such as: weird, neat, and nice. Below are some …

**Telling:** The girls were excited.

**Showing:** Giggles and screams filled the arena. The soft curls were now damp with perspiration and the anticipation of the event. They held tight to each other in a mock effort to contain themselves. Arms flailed upward, and voices echoed in varying tones. The moment was here.

**Telling:** The room was vacant.

**Showing:** The door opened with a resounding echo that seemed to fill the house. Cob webs once attached flowed freely in the air as the open door brought light to a well-worn floor. The light gave notice to the peeling paint on the walls and to the silhouettes once covered by pictures. The new air gave life to ta stuffiness that entrapped the room. Faded and torn white sheets covered once new furniture now drowning in dust.

**Telling:** The pizza was delicious.

**Showing:** Steam rising up off the melted cheese made my mouth water. The first bite, my teeth sinking into the cheese through the tomato sauce and into the moist crust, made me chew and swallow rapidly. Even the cheese and tomato sauce, sticking to my fingertips, begged to be licked.

**Telling:** My father brought home fried chicken for dinner.

**Showing:** As soon as I heard the key turn in the door, my sister and I ran to the entryway. There was Dad, still wearing his black raincoat from which dripped tiny rivers into miniature lakes on the floor. He smiled and my little sister beamed. “Daddy’s home!” she yelled to anyone close enough to hear. I smiled too, not as happy to see him as I was to smell the rejuvenating, spicy aroma of fried chicken that wafted from the grocery bag in his hands.

YOUR TURN:

1. The room was a mess.
2. It was a hot day.
3. The house was magnificent.
4. The place was deserted.
5. My mother became very angry.
6. He was a cool guy. Everybody liked him.
7. I realized I had lost my homework.
8. Class was boring.
9. She was a beautiful woman.
10. The plumber showed up at our house.