**STRATEGIES TO USE TO “SHOW,” NOT “TELL”**

1. **Use descriptive details.** (Think: 5 senses.)

*Examples:*

*The air smelled of pine and sagebrush and juniper and dust.*

*The dust rose into my mouth and nose, making me sneeze.*

*A chipmunk chittered as a pinecone crunched under my* *foot.*

*I grabbed a jacket, and stuffed my flashlight into my pocket.*

*I was so sweaty, my shirt stuck to my back.*

  2. **Use action.** (Think: strong verbs.)

*Example:*

*I let go of the screen door. Ol’ Red must’ve heard it* squeal*, ‘cause all of a sudden he* streaked *by. Almost* knocked *me over as he* pushed *it open and* leaped *outside.*

3. **Use dialogue and character thoughts.**

*Example:*

*And the more I thought about it, the madder I got, until finally I just sort of boiled over.*

*“You treat ‘Ol Red better than you treat me!” I yelled. Correcting my manners, and making me work all the time. And I hate wearing shoes. I WANT TO BE A DOG!”*

4. **Use Figurative Language**

*Example:* *The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.*

- excerpt from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot

**Directions: In at least 2 sentences, convert the following “telling” sentences to sentences that “show” using the strategies suggested below.**

Sarah was fed up with their antics.

1. Show by appealing to the senses:­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­

Jeremiah thought the quiz was unfair.

1. Show with actions:

Mr. Hoffman was happy his friend was visiting.

1. Show using dialogue and character’s thoughts:

The room was boring.

1. Show using figurative language

**Directions: Read the following passages and then describe what is being “shown” in the space provided. What strategies are being used to show not tell?**

Cecelia laid her [baby] on a quilt on the floor…She dozed, only to

wake at the sound of roaring wind. She heard the giant sucking noise of

the maple roots as they tore from the ground. The tree sighed as it fell. Its

massive branches embraced the kitchen porch….She prayed the glass

panes would hold against the scraping of the wood. She waited, her head

pillowed next to her child. *from Cecelia’s Adventure, a North Carolina revolutionary war story*

When Daddy declared war on the wisteria, I was afraid he would

kill it all off. But he said he couldn’t kill it if he tried.

“Ann Fay,” he said, “that vine is just like you. It’s mighty pretty,

but it’s also determined. It would take a powerful strong enemy to destroy

either one of you.’

I wanted to believe him. But now that Daddy was off to fight a real

war, I felt destroyed already.

*From Blue, a middle-grade novel about the polio epidemic in 1944*

*in Hickory, North Carolina.*

The day was hot. Steamy. Janina and I were down near the

entrance to the cemetery, on Gesia Street. We were watching the long

parade of wagons lined up at the gate. The wagons were pulled by menhorses.

The bodies were in heaps. The number of them was much higher

than I could count at the time. A peppery cloud of flies hovered over the

flopped arms and legs. The air buzzed.

Only a few living people came with the wagons. Except for the

rags they wore and the fact that they were standing, they looked like the

bodies. *From a novel written by Jerry Spinelli about the Warsaw ghetto*