

Show, don't tell exercises

01 / Action and attention

Try one exercise, then compare it with the worked example in the guide. Type concise answers or print the sheet. Save a copy after filling. Different solutions can work.

1. Give emotion something to do

Starter: "Mina was anxious about showing her father the rejection letter."

Write 40-70 words. Give Mina an immediate goal and an action that complicates it. For this pass, leave out anxious, nervous and afraid.

Your version

Check: Can a reader infer a specific pressure? Keep any fact they need to understand the scene.

2. Choose details through a viewpoint

Setting: a rented room with a sticking window, a second lock and a clean patch where a picture hung.

Write two short views of the same room: one from someone seeking privacy, one from someone waiting for a partner to move in. Use at most two details per view.

Your version

Check: Does what the person notices suggest a priority? Preserve the room's physical facts.

Show, don't tell exercises

02 / Dialogue and scene time

Try one exercise, then compare it with the worked example in the guide. Type concise answers or print the sheet. Save a copy after filling. Different solutions can work.

3. Let a reply carry the feeling

Starter: "Asha was hurt that her friend had missed another rehearsal."

Write four lines of dialogue. Asha wants a commitment to the next rehearsal; the friend wants to leave. Add at most one action beat.

Your version

Check: Can you identify each person's request and response? A direct admission is allowed.

4. Expand the moment that changes things

Starter: "For a week, Eli practiced asking for a pay rise. On Friday, he finally asked."

Keep the week in one sentence. Spend 50-80 words on the moment he could retreat or commit. Show an obstacle and his response.

Your version

Check: Did the extra space go to a consequential choice rather than routine movements?

Show, don't tell exercises

03 / Viewpoint and summary

Try one exercise, then compare it with the worked example in the guide. Type concise answers or print the sheet. Save a copy after filling. Different solutions can work.

5. Separate observation from certainty

Starter: "Watching from the doorway, Lena knew that Rafi was ashamed of losing the key."

Keep Lena as the viewpoint character. Write what she can observe, then make any inference recognizably hers. Do not confirm Rafi's private thoughts.

Your version

Check: Could another motive explain the behavior? Keep that uncertainty if the scene needs it.

6. Use telling to reach the next choice

Situation: after an unsuccessful visit, someone spends three uneventful days waiting for an answer.

Bridge the three days in one or two sentences. Then write the first action that changes the situation. Keep 50-80 words overall.

Your version

Check: What does the summary let you skip? Where should the reader slow down again?