

Finding “Telling” Sentences in a Draft to Open with “Showing”

Example 1st draft of Family Story

My What's on Fire?

I used to spend so much time with my grandparents when I was a small child. Going to their house always felt like such a treat. We would play games like Hi Ho Cherrio, Old Maid and Chinese Checkers. Of course they would always let me win. My grandfather would and still does walk around the house whistling or singing an old country and western song that he had altered the lyrics to just to make us smile.

When I was about two years old, he thought it would be fun to teach me his version of my favorite song, "My Heart's on Fire For Elvira". He would always keep a serious look on his face while we were singing the altered lyrics and he would praise my singing ability so much that I became quite the performer.

At the time, my Grandpa was an officer in the military at Lackland Air Force Base. He loved to take me to the base and show off how beautiful and talented his first and only grandchild was. Apparently, he had been bragging on me for quite some time and on my next visit I drew in quite the crowd.

Once we made it to his office, he asked me if I wanted to sing my song for all of his coworkers and friends. Of course, the little rock star in me was only too happy to oblige. My grandfather stood me up on his immaculately organized desk and gave me a pencil to use as a microphone. I began to belt out the lyrics that I was taught, “My Fart’s on Fire For Elvira”. I heard some snickering but I kept on singing the rest of the lyrics that I knew. When I was done I got a standing ovation.

I was such a big hit that for many years after, anytime I visited my grandfather I was asked for encore. This is always one of the first stories told by my grandparents to any new friend or boyfriend that they have met over the years.

Example 1st draft of Family Story with possible “telling” sentences identified

My What's on Fire?

I used to spend so much time with my grandparents when I was a small child. Going to their house always felt like such a treat. We would play games like Hi Ho Cherrio, Old Maid and Chinese Checkers. Of course they would always let me win. **My grandfather would and still does walk around the house whistling or singing an old country and western song** that he had altered the lyrics to just to make us smile.

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I was such a big hit that for many years after, anytime I visited my grandfather I was asked for encore. This is always one of the first stories told by my grandparents to any new friend or boyfriend that they have met over the years.

Go to next page to see isolated sentences.

Telling sentences give us the answer; Showing sentences let us see things and “find the answer” ourselves. Each telling sentence presents the writer with a problem to solve: what is “told” in this sentence that I should now try to “show” by including more details and description?

Telling sentence	What the writer needs to show with his or her description? What is the problem to solve for the writer here? How would you act this emotion or scene if you were on stage?
My grandfather would and still does walk around the house whistling or singing an old country and western song	Can you show that the grandfather is whistling country songs?
He would always keep a serious look on his face while we were singing the altered lyrics and he would praise my singing ability so much that I became quite the performer.	Can you show his serious look? Can you show his praising?
the little rock star in me was only too happy to oblige.	Can you show how this girl was happy and excited to begin singing and do as her grandfather asked? Show enthusiasm and willingness.
I began to belt out the lyrics that I was taught,	Can you show belting? Can you show how she is singing loudly and with enthusiasm?
When I was done I got a standing ovation.	Can you show a standing ovation?