

More Show Not Tell Practice

1

One day, Sharon, who is eleven and in the sixth grade, got up to get ready for school. Sharon likes soccer, comic books, and rap, and she hates cleaning her room. When she can't find her kneepads because she's so disorganized, she gets worried about getting to the state championship game on time.

Sharon lay on her floor pulling stuff out from underneath her bed. Out flew her math book, last year's fifth-grade report on reptiles, some old CD cases, and a few *Doonesbury* comic books. "Where are those stupid knee pads?" she muttered. How was she going to help win the state championship if she couldn't find her knee pads?

2 CRAFT

"Good writers ...let us see people and ideas in action rather than depend on qualifiers. They give us specifics: strong nouns, precise verbs, actions we can see and hear, reactions we can feel. **An apple is big, red, round, crisp, shiny, and juicy. Unless this is a commercial for McIntosh apples, so what?** Instead, a writer would try to show something about the apple **only if there's something to be shown—if a quality of the apple reflects some meaning in the sentence or story.** For example: *I gobbled the green apples, I found in the clearing.* Now we have specific: hunger, unripe apples, a forest setting: now the apple beings to have a significance we can understand" (Atwell 165).

3 PRACTICE

The man went to the store. He couldn't find what he wanted, so he left.

Group 1 revision: ~~The man~~ **Zavier went roller-skated to the store Wal-mart.** He couldn't find what he was looking for **Kraft's Peppercorn Ranch on sale, so he left so he stormed all the way home.**

Group 2 revision: ~~The man went~~ **homeless man crawled out of his box, and wobbled to Wal-Mart.** ~~to the store. He couldn't find what he wanted~~ **begged for change, but he had no luck. So he left took off back to his box, crying.**

Group 3 revision: ~~The wrinkled man went~~ **limped to the Vision Center store. He was almost blind so he couldn't find- identify his new pair of glasses what he- wanted-, so he left because the eye doctor was on a lunch break.**

YOUR TURN

Mr. Hoffman was happy. He had gotten a visit from a friend who had been gone for a long time.

The Big Three to Remember when Revising

Diction

“Diction refers to the author’s choice of words...The perfect word is clear, concrete, and exact. In other words, it says exactly what you want it to say, is specific, and creates just the picture you see in your mind.”

Details

“Detail includes facts, observations, reasons, examples, and incidents that a writer uses to develop a subject. Specific details create a clear mental picture for the reader by focusing on particulars rather than abstractions” (Dean, p. 22). In other words, when a student writes, “My vacation was loads of fun and I did lots of new things,” prompt him to include specific details by asking probing questions. “Where did you go and what did you do that was fun? Who was with you? Did you see, taste, hear, or smell something that you had never experienced before? What did it feel like to be trying out something new?”

Figurative Language

Figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, and alliteration, is another device to muscle up writing. “We use figurative language because it’s a rich, strong, and vivid way to express meaning.” (Dean 35)

Specific is Terrific!

Concise is Nice!

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