

Short Story #1: Description

So you're fine-tuning your skills in showing not telling, huh? Think "description" is your middle name? Well, good! Here's an opportunity for you to strut your stuff. You will write three short stories this year, and this is your first. Each story you write will have a different focus, and for your first one, the focus is on using sensory and descriptive language: showing not telling.

What you write about is your choice. Nonfiction, fiction, fantasy, sci-fi ... it's all up to you. You can write about space dogs or flower fairies, the day your dog ran away or the day you wished your brother would have. You can write about a magic hat or a tragic mitten. The topic is up to you.

There are, of course, some restrictions:

1. All characters must be of your own creation. While Mickey Mouse and Alex Rider are cool, so are the millions of uncreated characters waiting in your brain.
2. This is truly a short story ... 2-4 pages double-spaced. Try to stay within these parameters; I'm thrilled if you want to write more, but part of the challenge I'm putting to you on this assignment is to get a full story across with limited words. For those of you who love to write, you will have other opportunities to create longer papers should you wish.
3. No or minimal dialogue. We will work on dialogue later this year, and your next short story will have lots of it. But the focus of this story is

to showcase your ability to use descriptive and sensory language. This can be best accomplished by limiting dialogue. Plus, we haven't gotten to writing dialogue yet, and there are many rules to learn!

As discussed in class, your story will be written during class, not as homework. That doesn't mean, however, that you might not come up with the **perfect** idea, word, or paragraph during dinner, carpool, or right before bed. Write those ideas down and bring them to class! Inspiration happens everywhere and writers know that their best ideas don't come during handy times when they're sitting at their computers. **YOU** are a writer. Be prepared for the unexpected!