

# Creative Use of English

## Telling

Directly give information with limited room for imagination

I was excited about the news.

## Showing

Paint a picture in readers' mind

When I heard the news, my heart started pounding. I couldn't help letting out a scream.

## How?

In the **Showing** example, the emotion of being "excited" is depicted with actions. The ways the heart beat and "I" laughed are vividly described to allow the reader **to imagine** or even **to experience** what the character feels.

### To show feelings:

Describe characters' **actions** in that emotion.

## Your turn!

Rewrite the following sentence to show feelings with actions:

**The girl was scared.**

Step 1: List **actions** when someone was **scared**.

E.g. body felt numb/legs turned to jelly

- stomach clenched
- throat tightened
- cringed
- froze
- let out a silent scream

Step 2: Write sentences based on what you have brainstormed in Step 1.

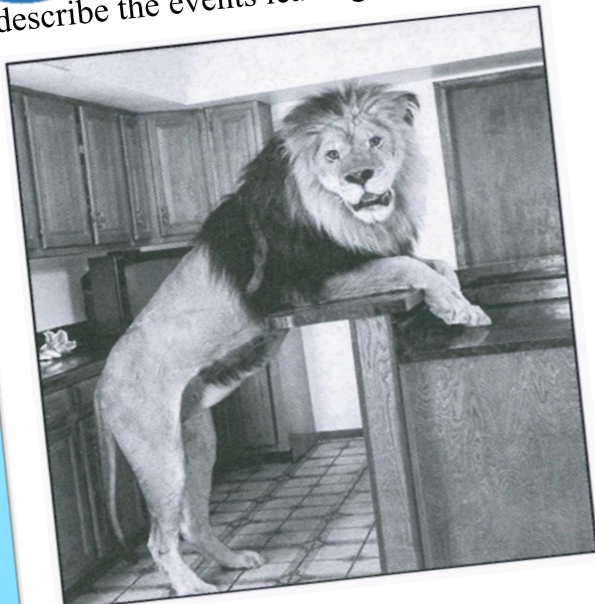
- E.g. The girl's body felt numb. Her legs turned to jelly.
1. She cringed with a tightened throat.
  2. She stood frozen to the spot. She let out a silent scream.

Notes: Actions of both the character and the character's body parts can be described. The subject varies in different descriptions, i.e. the character or the character's body parts.

# Showing Not Telling

## Topic

You are entering a short story competition on the topic of 'Wildlife'. Your story should describe the events leading up to the image below.



Write your story.

Writing topic taken from Paper 2 of the 2017 HKDSE English Language Examination ©HKEAA

Rewrite the underlined parts to show feelings with **actions**:

I heard some noise from the kitchen so I (e.g.) went over nervously. When I walked into the kitchen, I saw (a) a hungry and angry lion. (b) I was shocked and frightened. The lion heard me and turned around. It crawled towards me with its tail held high. (c) I was afraid until it lay in front of me, purring like my pet cat. Seeing its gentle gesture, (d) I felt rather relieved. All of a sudden, the lion (e) said sadly, "I'm starving."



I heard some noise from the kitchen so I (e.g.) **gulped and tiptoed over to the kitchen with butterflies in my stomach**. When I walked into the kitchen, I saw a lion (a) **scratching the counter top of the bar table fiercely with its belly growling**. (b) **My jaw dropped and my heart leapt into my throat**. The lion heard me and turned around. It crawled towards me with its tail held high. (c) **I trembled inside, sweated profusely and was glued to the spot** until it lay in front of me, purring like my pet cat. Seeing its gentle gesture, (d) **I lowered my guard and leaned forward**. All of a sudden, the lion (e) **whimpered with a long face**, "I'm starving."

Notes: Prepositional phrases (e.g. with sweaty palms, tearful eyes, a trembling voice) can also be used to show feelings, especially to replace adverbs.