Levels of Showing and Telling

Writers are often urged to *show* stories rather than *tell* them, to get specific and write the details. The more sense detail we use to narrate an experience, the more clearly the reader can render the scene in his/her mind. This ability to manipulate the images in your narrative also allows you to slow time down or speed it up, depending on the level of detail you include.

Tip: To practice showing instead of telling, describe a sensation without using any signifiers. For example, try to show your reader that something is cold, but don't use the word "cold" or any of its synonyms, only descriptions. Another way to practice is to describe an emotion but only use actions to communicate what the emotion is.

Summary	*I was excited.*
Summary expanded to offer more information	*I was excited to finish the climb.*
Summary with **imagery**	My arms burned, but as I pulled my body past the overhanging rock *I was excited to finish the climb.*
Greater **imagery** with remaining ***summary***	My arms burned, but as I pressed my fingers against the stone, pulling my body past the overhanging rock, I felt a cool rush of excitement. *As I finished the climb*, the familiar "clink" of the carabiner as I clipped the rope in place reverberated through my entire body.
Scene (includes even greater **imagery** along with various ***summaries*** to form the complete narrative)	The sun licked at my back as I moved up the cliff, leaving Logan River and its refreshing mist below. *Each moment required a strength I was not sure I had. But I kept on, playing a sadistic game of Twister with the cliff face.* *The overhang was daunting.* *I braced myself for the stone's difficult angle.* My arms burned, but as I pressed my fingers against the stone, pulling my body past the overhanging rock, *I felt a cool rush of excitement.* I lifted the rope from its knot at my harness to the chains at the end of the climb. The familiar "clink" of the carabiner as I clipped the rope in place reverberated through my entire body.

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