

## Excerpt from Scott Edelstein, *The Writer's Book of Checklists*

### How to Show Instead of Tell

1. "Keep in mind that good fiction reveals rather than explains. Your goal in each piece of fiction is to provide your reader with actual *experience*, not merely with concepts and outlines of events.
2. As you write a scene, imagine that you are there watching it unfold before you, step by step. Then write down what you experience-what you see, hear, touch, smell and/or taste.
3. Reveal your characters primarily through their actions, not by telling your readers about them.
4. Remember that very little in this world is static and silent, including objects-even "stationary" objects. In a house, for example, the floors might creak, a screen door might fly open in the wind, and smoke might rise from the chimney. When you present an object or setting to readers, you can make it far more vivid by showing it in motion.
5. Get out of the way. Intrude with background, asides, and observations of your own as infrequently as possible.
6. Read each of your drafts carefully, aloud. If you can't experience a scene as if you were living through it yourself, work on it some more."