

Harrison

SHOW DON'T TELL

First drafts often do too much telling and not enough showing. We need to pull our readers into the picture. Let them smell and hear and taste what's going on. This helps make our story or poem real. Here are the first and final drafts of a poem from *Pirates*. The first draft tells. The last one shows. See if your students can see the differences.

Cat O' Nine Tails

(First draft = 50 words, 8 lines)

I shouldn't a broke the rules, aye,
Got none to blame but me.
Story of me life, aye,
I shouldn't a come ta sea.
I knew I'd get in a fight, aye,
With me it never fails.
Now I'm gonna catch it, aye,
From the cat o' nine long tails.

(Final draft = 48 words, 12 lines)

Why was I such a fool?

Unh!

Why is it always me?

Shouldn't a broke a rule

Unh!

Where everyone could see.

Shouldn't a picked a fight

Unh!

Knowin' it never fails

Ta earn ye the cut and bite

Unh!

Of the Cat-o'-the-nine long tails.