Based on just those 3.5 minutes we saw of Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones is:

Brave

Crazy

Adventurous

Greedy

Smart

Confident

Cocky

When I was sitting there in the dark theater, 12 years old, before the movie started, there was no sentence that appeared on the dark screen and said, “The hero of the movie you are about to see is…”

We figured all of the above out by observation; we observed what the movie makers SHOWED us about the character.

There’s an important rule in narrative writing, be your story fact or fiction, that says:

SHOW, DON’T TELL.

My uncle Larry is crazy.

Your questions are why and how.

My uncle Larry sees dead people.

My uncle Larry gets drunk and gets his Colt .45 out.

My uncle Larry likes to go on six-hour road trips at the drop of a hat.

My uncle Larry gets drunk and dance on tables at weddings.

Illustrations and examples (Show, Don’t Tell) are your friend.

I walked into the room and instantly knew she was mad. Her face was red, scowling, and scrunched up, and even though you she was giving me a cold stare you could see the fire in her eyes.

Any time you can get physical description, the five senses or a strong image in there, that’s what tends to stay with people.

I walked outside and knew it was going to rain. The clouds were dark grey and heavy which looked huge and fluffy. There was a fishy smell to the air. There was a humidity against my skin. There was a fog crawling along the pavement. Also, my hair instantly frizzed.

I am going to the store.

“I am going to the store,” Mom said. You change the period after store into a comma. It goes inside the quotation mark. The idea is the whole thing from I to said is one sentence. The exact things the speaker says is what goes inside the quote marks.

“I am going to the store. I am going to buy shoes and a hat,” Mom said.

Mom said, “I am going to the store.” Then she left.

The punctuation always goes inside the quotation mark.

“I am going to the store,” Mom said. “I am going to buy a hat and shoes.” Then she left.

“I am going to the store!” Mom exclaimed.

“Am I going to the store?” Mom asked.

If the quote ends with an exclamation point or a question mark, there is no comma involved.

Dialogue can show us things about the characters involved. The way a person says things, and the words they choose to use can reveal a lot about them.

Dialogue can also be used to “further the plot.” Your dialogue should have a reason for being.

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“Why did you steal my dolly?” Jane asked.

“I didn’t steal your doll,” James said.

“Did too!”

“Did not!”

“Then why is it there in your hand behind your back?” Jane asked.

You start a new paragraph each time you switch speakers.