

examples VS. **Examples**

Quite often in the writing lab, students come to get help with papers because their teachers have told them they need to include better examples of what they are writing about. As writing lab tutors we've all had this happen to us at one time or another. A student comes in with a paper about how dirty their roommate is (one example), and within their paper they state, "My roommate is a very dirty little boy/girl. He/She is so dirty it makes me want to vomit all over our floor. Oh my gosh, like my roommate is the dirtiest person EVER!" Then as brilliant writing lab tutors we proceed to scratch our heads and say (politely), "Ok, I understand that your roommate is very dirty. But how is your roommate dirty? Why does your roommate make you want to vomit all over the floor? Does your roommate go to the bathroom and not flush the toilet? Are there dirty dishes piling up in the sink? Let's try to giving some examples of just how dirty your roommate is".

Stating vs. providing full examples is an age old problem that writing lab tutors have had to help tutees with. Why are full examples so important? Because they give the writer opportunities to be creative; but more importantly, full and descriptive examples allow the reader to be moved by the writing. Intricate details can liven up what would otherwise be a dead piece of writing, and also give information that is much needed in order to effectively prove a point.

Below are two example of stating vs. providing full examples. However, as you can imagine, there are countless ways of giving rich and full examples within a person's writing.

Statement 1: One time I went camping in the winter and it was really cold outside. However, I enjoyed being out in the cold wilderness. I slept in an orange tent while I was camping that particular winter.

Full example 1:

My first morning of winter camping I awoke to a bitterly cold sunrise. The thermometer on my pack read negative five degrees but my body was telling me it was much colder. Each breath of the crisp air expanded in my lungs and left a tingling sensation inside of them. It was as if there were actual snowflakes inside my chest and each one pricked the sensitive pink tissue as it land. Every time I inhaled, my head felt less cloudy. The arctic air was quickly unraveling the sleep that was still lingering in my head. The sun shined through the side of my orange tent and cast a warm glow within. I was in the center of a pumpkin that got brighter as the sun climbed over the treetops and higher into the sky. My soul was awakened with a new willingness to greet the day ahead of me.

Statement 2:

I hate people who talk really close to me. They are conversationally challenged. They are what I like to call “close talkers”. These kinds of people make me feel really uncomfortable. I feel like close talkers get inside my personal space.

Full example 2:

Close talkers are the worst of the conversationally challenged. I have come to know this fact after innumerable conversations with the type. One friend of mine named Jane is known to be a very close talker. Jane, and others like her, barrel through that invisible line at which a normal person would stop to have a conversation. As she speaks, I find myself reeling backward in a vain attempt to cushion the space between us. Her breath is still warm when it reaches my face, and in my mind I believe it is forming like droplets of condensation on my cheeks. Paying little attention to what she is saying, I stand my ground until finally her nearness is too much. Her closeness is unbearable. As subtly as possible, I take a step back and reposition myself. Again Jane advances and together we perform an awkward waltz without music.