

Example Illustration

Specific examples to represent - clarify - support abstractions

Purpose

To support abstract statements and make them concrete, so a reader can: see, hear, taste, touch, or smell it.

There are basically two types of examples

1. **Descriptive\Static** = sample, specimen, an object, a thing, person, place, or thing etc....

Example of Descriptive\Static Example:

abstract statement (Main Idea) = Contemporary students have too many distractions

examples: Cell phones, television, and radios

abstract statement (Main Idea) = Drivers in NJ create hazardous situations.

examples: Driving while talking on a cell phone, texting while driving, tuning in the radio while in driving

2. **Narrative Case Example** = an actual real life event that exemplifies your abstract statement

Example of Narrative Case Example

abstract statement (Main Idea) = Contemporary students have too many distractions.

example: Yesterday in my English class the discussion was about cell phone usage during school. The class seemed eager to discuss this contemporary topic, and many students gave short stories of how their cell phones interfered with concentration. As I moved around the room asking questions, I noticed a young woman in the back with her head down. I asked her a question, and she immediately jumped and scrambled to hide something. She did not know my questions and had no answer, She then admitted that while the class was discussing distractions, she was busy texting her mother about what they were going to do for dinner. Clearly she illustrated the point of the lesson.

"Exemplification" means "the giving of an example." An exemplification paper usually starts with a main idea, belief, or opinion--something abstract--and then gives one extended example or a series of shorter examples to illustrate that main idea. In fact, an exemplification paper is a paper that illustrates an abstract idea. For example, if I wished to write an exemplification paper about "The Opposite Sex--Problems and Pleasures" (as a man or as a woman), there might be two ways I could go about this. One would be, after introducing my general idea, to tell several little stories about--give examples of--how the opposite sex can be both a problem to deal with and a pleasure to be with. The other way I might write the paper (and a stronger, more unified way of doing it) might be to pick out one person of the opposite gender I have dated or lived with and describe how this one person gave me both problems and pleasures in my overall relationship with him or her.

A typical short exemplification paper is written like most of the other rhetorical-modes paper. It usually starts with a single introductory paragraph that briefly defines your subject and states what you will do in the paper--exemplify. Then there are one or two to many paragraphs offering one or more extended examples of your subject. Finally, there is a brief closing paragraph restating what your subject is and offering some kind of final brief, strong example or some other kind of interesting ending. Your audience is anyone who might only have a partial understanding of the subject and to whom an example would be helpful: in fact, you choose your examples partly by deciding what the audience will easily understand.

Shorter versions of this rhetorical mode exist, as do the others, within the space of a few paragraphs, one paragraph, or even as part of a larger paragraph. Exemplification simply means to give an example of a subject, and it is possible to do this in as little as a sentence.

Answers questions like:

Can you be more specific? Show me what you are talking about?

What evidence can you provide as support? What are examples your point?

Concrete representations of general or abstract thinking

Specific: statistics, people, events, objects, etc.

How to do it

Example/illustrations may be:

One sentence example

One paragraph example

One entire essay as an example

ex:

Abstract statement: Madonna is not person young girls should be looking up to.

One sentence example: *Madonna wears underwear on the outside of her clothing*

One paragraph example: *(may be one long narrative of an event she participated in that showed her bad behaviors.)*

One essay example: *entire essay may be about Madonna It may delve into several main ideas such as: (her dress, her speech, her behavior) one per paragraph.*

Checklist

- ✓ Does your writing provide plenty of concrete examples?
- ✓ Do your examples prove your ideas?
- ✓ Is it developed with enough concrete techniques to support your ideas?