

Details: Being Concrete and Specific

Earlier we looked at the importance of following **abstract ideas** with **concrete nouns** to create a mental picture for the reader of things we can experience with our senses.

In addition to being concrete, it is important to be as specific as possible in our writing. Often, out of laziness, we use the first word that comes to mind or the most general term to explain ourselves. This can make our writing dull and generic.

Too general: **The dog chased the ball.** *It is hard for us to picture the dog or ball because it could be any dog or any ball.*

More specific: **The cocker spaniel chased the red rubber ball.** *Can you see it?*

We have access to so many words that we don't think to use. With practice, we can train ourselves to use more words and to choose the most precise words to say what we mean. Also, we can learn to use **adjectives**, describing words like *red* and *rubber* above, to create more specific images for the objects we write about.

Here are some examples of sentences that are not as specific as they could be. Rewrite each example, or add to it, to make it more specific.

1. I took my kid to see a movie. _____

2. We used to live in a nice house. _____

3. That woman is looking at me. _____

4. The president addressed the people. _____

5. My boss is in a bad mood. _____

6. I've been to Mexico many times. _____

7. This teacher was different from the rest. _____

8. My goal in life is to make lots of money. _____
