

Exemplification Pattern



Exemplifications=Example=Illustration

- occurs when the writer supplies different examples to defend topic sentence
- can exist as individual sentences, full paragraphs, or in full essay format
- helps clarify your opinion and strengthens your main topic
- proves that your opinion contains valid arguments

Strategies to Avoid

1. generalities

imprecise or vague statements, casual observations:

A man had trouble lifting a box from his car.

—be specific:

Joe, a young man out of shape, struggled to lift the wooden crate out of his 1980's Ford Mustang.

2. fictional creations, or fake details

all statistical evidence must be backed up by an authority or expert

3. heavy, abstracted ideas:

ambiguous: The fall day had great beauty despite the dreariness.

—be concrete: Damp red and yellow leaves gleamed through a gray mist.

Exemplification Functions

- **persuade/confirm/influence:** these help convince to the opposition your view and opinions demonstrate validity; these affirm ideas for those in agreement with you; influence neutral parties
- **speculate:** show possible actions or reactions to a given situation
- **explain** difficult ideas: discuss types of elements related to one subject
- **prevent miscommunication:** prevent possible misinterpretation
- **clarify/defend** topic sentence
- **back up comments:** every idea presented must be defended with an example and/or a quotation from an authoritative reference

Objective or Subjective

Examples can be subjective or objective by tone or word choice.

N. Scott Momaday uses historical data of his grandmother's personal experiences from childhood (§ 9/ p 186); his tone is objective, yet it shows the reader a subjective opinion. The whole essay contains a subjective theme, yet he wants non-Native readers to react in their own fashion. He never uses blatant, angry tones to blame the white government's actions for the dispersal of the tribe.

Be certain you know if your audience is:

- against your idea
- agrees with your idea
- neutral to your idea

What to Use

- personal experience examples < *informal essays only*
- public opinions and editorials; *some* blogs, if from authoritative figure
- memoirs, other people's experiences
- quotes in interviews, printed material
- credible facts found in research (statistics, dates, general information)
- scientific theories
- hypothetical examples can be used with **target words**:

Suppose we colonize the moon with convicted criminals—

Let's assume long distance space flight will be achieved within our lifetime—

How to Use

- Use several examples— do not rely on just one to make your point
- Be sure the information is *relevant* and does not *contradict* your opinion
- Make sure your information is *accurate* and *up-to-date*;
information should not be older than five years old
- Use examples which are *representative* of your topic;
do not stray into other side issues
- Develop your examples with parallelism and extensive details;
be specific and thorough

Organization

These methods are similar to the Description Pattern's organization strategies—

- **chronological—linear time line**
- **spatial—**
- **emphatic: minor examples leading to most extreme**