

Selected passages from the Examples chapter (from *Patterns: a Short Prose Reader*)

1. Some writers announce their strategy outright by the words "for example," or "for instance." Other writers may include several examples without announcing them so directly and thereby expect the reader to notice that they are indeed specific examples.
2. To make a clear case, the writer usually wants to give several examples, often to show several sides of an idea. The topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph and the thesis statement states the main idea of an essay. Both are usually general statements that must be clarified through the writer's mode of development. Sometimes, without concrete examples, the reader will have only a vague idea of what the writer's topic sentence or thesis statement means.
3. In essays, an example sometimes appears at the very beginning of the essay to introduce the thesis.
4. Examples in an essay can both illustrate and support the thesis. That is, if a writer makes a claim or a point in the thesis statement and then provides evidence in the form of actual situations that illustrate the thesis, it will help convince the reader that the thesis is valid. When you write, you should also search for examples as a way to test your thesis.
5. In addition to providing concrete support for the thesis, examples can be used in other ways to enliven and clarify writing. In a description, for instance, examples can give concrete details in a way that adds variety and interest. A single example may also be extended throughout an essay to illustrate the thesis.
6. When using examples in your own writing, brainstorm for possibilities and select those that illustrate your idea most accurately. In choosing among possibilities, favor those that you sense your reader will respond to as convincing and colorful. Several well-chosen examples will often hold your reader's interest and add credibility to your main idea