

Concrete Detail

Following you will find examples of relative terms that need a concrete explanation or a specific definition if you use them in your writing. Left unexplained, these types of terms make writing imprecise and potentially ambiguous.

a lot	expensive	many	*soft
*beautiful	fast	new	some
cheap	heavy	often	tall
*comfortable	high	old	thin
*cute	hot	quality	*ugly
difficult	light	short	young
easy	low	slow	

*These terms are especially subjective, that is, open to interpretation, a matter of taste, difficult to measure, and so on. You may find them not only difficult, but inappropriate, to use in scientific and professional writing.

A-level concrete detail

My roommate is a slob. She leaves her half-drunk coffee on my dresser 3 days out of 4, and her bedspread has an inch-thick layer of dog hair on it. Last Tuesday, the San Luis Obispo Health Department issued her a citation for the fish smell coming from her car.

B-level concrete detail

My roommate is a slob. He leaves his dirty dishes in the sink every day. He throws his school and athletic equipment down the minute he walks in the door.

C-level

My roommate is a slob. She leaves a mess in the sink all the time. I am always tripping over her junk. She leaves messes in the bathroom too.

D-level

My roommate is a slob. He leaves a lot of messes everywhere and never cleans up after himself. I can't stand coming home to the filth. Our house looks like a disaster zone.

⇒ **Warning!**

Use only relevant details; inappropriate concrete detail may bore or confuse your reader. Make sure the reader can see how **your details are connected to your point.**

Inappropriate Concrete Detail

My roommate is a slob. He got 3 Ds and an F last quarter, and his mother calls twice a day.