

Avoid Generalities (see example A)
Use Concrete and Specific Words (see examples A & B)

A) This last summer I had an experience that showed me how much people care about me. And helped me realize how much I should be thankful for.

The experience showed to me that my parents really do care for me and love me. It made me realize that my parents are more concerned with my welfare and well being than their own wants, needs, and desires. It brought to me a clear view and understanding that even though I do something that my parents disagree with or even may offend them, they still give the same affection to me as if I hadn't done anything wrong. It proved to me that my parents are the kind of people I want to be more like.

Also, other people revealed their concern and interest in me during my trying experience. One of these which was my relatives. They helped me by helping my family. Giving to them assuring thoughts and hopes that comforted my family greatly. In addition to them there were many more. Especially needed at that time was my friends. Those are the times that sift out your true friends from the rest of your peers and acquaintances. They are the ones that you can put your trust into and rely on for assistance in your times of need. They showed this to me by going out of their way to see that I was alright by cheering me up with some words of encouragement. Those I feel are the ways of showing true friendship and am happy to say were given to me.

Next I remember how people who not even being acquainted with me, but knowing my parents, worried about me and gave cards to me of cheerful uplifting words, and expressing their desire for me to once again to return to health.

I feel also that God greatly manifested his love for me and his want for me to stay on this earth by helping everybody to do what they were trained to do or what they thought they should do. I am especially thankful for the guidance he gave to the doctors and all the medical personnel.

This experience helped me tremendously by freeing my body of its ailment. This experience had an enormous impact on me by showing me how much people really do mean to others.

B) After a week's experience, I didn't think "fun" was the right word to describe the job anymore. Day after day, we bounced up and down the dusty fields staggering like drunken men while the truck lurched forwards and sideways over each furrow in the field. On a particularly abrupt jerk, I was sent sprawling over the bale that I had just struggled into position, knocking over the whole stack.

We sweltered as the heat from the sun and the reflected heat from the truck's metal bed baked us with oven-like intensity. I sweated constantly, great drops rolling down my face as fast as I wiped them off with sodden sleeves. My eyes stung with salt and my nose burned with the stink of exhaust fumes and hot hay. Dust, churned up by the rolling wheels, choked us and mixing with our sweat, covered us with an itchy-sticky film. Worse yet, the fine gritty hay chaff filled the air, sifting down our collars, up our sleeves and pant legs -- everywhere itching and crawling. The first day my nose started running. The second day I began to sneeze.

C) After you've been away at school for a week or two, subtle messages begin to clog your brain, and the mother you were so eager to leave behind becomes a precious commodity. You get messages such as moss growing on the edge of the bathroom sink, jeans do not disappear off the bedroom floor and reappear pressed and folded, and anything left in the freezer has become lost in a sort of winter wonderland.

As you gaze at the havoc around you, you begin to realize that good ol' mom did more than conduct the Spanish Inquisition. She must have been the one making sure there were clean sheets, and she must have been the one who knew how much salt goes in macaroni and cheese.

You have now seen what things are like without her, and now you are ready to acknowledge that maybe mom was really great.

Three ways to add concrete and specific detail to writing (taken from Francis Christensen)

- Add a quality or attribute (the little brick house the color of dried blood)
- Add a detail (The man was still asleep, snoring softly, his head tipped against the wall.)
- Make a comparison—simile or metaphor (. . . and let the evening peel away aimlessly as you might peel some promising fruit you are in no hurry to eat.)