**LANGUAGE ARTS 10
SPECIFIC EXAMPLES**

“Be sure to list at least 3 specific examples of \_\_\_\_.” This is a common sentence found on test questions, essay prompts, and well…just about any kind of writing you are asked to do. Have you ever written something thinking you used 3 specific examples and yet the grade on the rubric says you did not use 3? Have you actually asked the teacher…

**What do you count as a specific example?**

Most students don’t. It seems to be a question that no one ever asks because everyone thinks that it’s something everyone’s supposed to know, but no one really knows; however, everyone plays along as if they know. Let’s pretend you asked me. “That’s a great question, thanks for asking!”

A Specific Example Can Be A:

* **Quote**
* **Fact**
* **Event**

Coincidentally, those are the details you listed on your outline! It’s like I planned it or something…BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE! Call within the next 10 minutes…and I’ll throw in some bonus definitions.

**What exactly is a quote?**

Quotes are SPECIFIC; they are the exact words of the author or someone in the book. They are best used to highlight very important and revealing information about characters that is so important; you do not want anyone to misinterpret the information so you let the character or author “speak for himself”. Quotes require page numbers.

**What exactly is a fact?**

Excellent question! A fact is something SPECIFIC that occurs or is in the story (let’s just limit the definition to literature) that is not disputable by readers, the author, or the characters. You usually paraphrase a fact. It’s a good idea for facts to have a page number.

**What exactly is an event?**

An event is just like what it appears to be…an SPECIFIC event (something that happened) in the book. Events may not be singular moments, if they are, you should cite a page number. If you are summarizing, you may not need a page number.

OK—got that? A specific example is a SPECIFIC quote, a fact, or an event. Quotes are exact words of the author or a character, a fact is something that is or occurs in the story, and an event is something that happened in the book. BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE! Call within the next 5 minutes and I’ll double your order! That’s right you’ll get the explanation of a specific example, the bonus definitions of specific example types, AND the **EXAMPLES** of the types of specific examples.

**Quote**

“Sarah Good will only sit in jail some time—*recalling*—and here’s a wonder for you; think on this. Goody Good is pregnant!” (59).

**Fact**

Goody Putnam had seven children die in childbirth. She accuses Rebecca Nurse, a midwife, of murdering them before they lived a day (39).

**Event**

There were several girls, including Abigail Williams, Mary Warren, and Mercy Lewis, were in the forest with Tituba singing and dancing around a fire.

The line between fact and event is blurry. An event is a fact (it happened, therefore it cannot be disputed) and a fact can be an event (for the same reason). There are some times when the difference is apparent, and other times when the difference is not apparent. The important part is that you recognize what is a quote, fact, and event—not how to tell them apart.

**You Try It: Good Specific Example or Not**

1. People are being hanged in Salem for witchcraft. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. John Proctor was hanged in Salem in the late 1690s for witchcraft. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. “Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!” (143). \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. He tries to get Proctor to confess. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **The Next Step: Weaving Specific Examples into Paragraphs**

A funny thing happens with quotes…well, specific examples in general. They are just kind of thrown in the paragraph because the teacher required it. The transition to and from the specific example is either not there or awkward. The hashtag #letsmakeitawkward does not apply to specific examples. You don’t want to drop it like it’s hot, carefully set the specific example in place like it’s your parents’ brand new car that you took without asking and are trying to return without them noticing that it was moved.