

Avoid Mushy Writing: Be Specific

Everybody makes generalizations. That's a generalization. People use generalizations to give basic, overall ideas. On the other hand, specific statements give more precise information. You can use them to give your reader a clearer idea of what you are writing about. This chart shows the difference between general and specific statements.

GENERAL	SPECIFIC
Everybody loves ice cream!	Grace and Al Donnelly love banana almond fudge ice cream.
Lots of people own TVs.	Ninety-nine percent of Americans own color TVs with remote controls.
Writing is hard.	Writing letters is hard for me because I'm never sure what to say in the first sentence.
The West is a great place to live.	San Francisco, California, is a great place to live because of the beautiful weather.

Think about the statement, **"Everybody loves ice cream!"** Who is **"everybody"**? If you mention the names Grace and Al, you are talking about specific people who love ice cream. Look at the chart below. Write specific statements in the column at right.

GENERAL	SPECIFIC
1. Kids drive their parents crazy.	
2. Everyone loves to go on vacation.	
3. Machines are hard to fix.	
4. The trees are colorful.	