

Name _____ Date _____

Levels of Specificity

Focus

When writers want to describe something the best they can, they will try not to use a general word but a word that is more specific and paints a certain picture for the reader. For example, a writer who wants to show the reader exactly what a trip to the circus is like would not use words like *people*, *animals*, and *attractions* to describe the event. The writer would speak of *the ringmaster*, *the tightrope walker*, *the elephants*, *the lions*, and *the clowns*. Here are two sentences with the same message, yet one uses specific words and one only general words:

We were impressed with the entertainer who loudly announced the next act—the animals.

We were impressed with the ringmaster who loudly announced the next act—the lions.

Practice

Put the following groups of words in order from the most general to the most specific.

1. recliner, furniture, chair _____
2. teacher, person, math professor _____
3. utensil, spoon, soup spoon _____
4. raspberry, fruit, food _____
5. lake, Lake Michigan, body of water _____