

## Concrete

*The abstract painter can either recreate objects in a transformed fashion—Braque's intersecting planes-- or as direct portrayal of peaches and plums in a bowl, 'the real things.' The concrete mind is happiest dealing with the given world just as it is, in all its actuality. A shoe is a shoe, a dog a dog. Plato's ideas are supports to thinking about the world, but their real function—the concrete mind says--is simply to make that real world make sense to us. The ideas help us understand concrete objects and their inter relationships.*

### Examples

#### 1 Scientific proposal

A concrete proposal, in the scientific world, is one that is built on details, figures, statistics; references to what can be empirically pointed to. If you are considering supporting my proposal on the coleoptera of Linn County, you will want to see my cv—with all the data about my professional background and full bibliographical references. You will want a crisp, no nonsense précis of the research I want to carry out, with details of when and where I will accomplish this and that. You may appreciate a precise and detailed letter of support from a colleague. You will not want to hear my larger views on the place of science in society. You will not even want to read my views of the challenges to entomological investigation, as more data are gathered. Rather you will let the facts of the moment speak for themselves.

#### 2 Concreteness in language

The 19th century French poet, Theophile Gautier, described himself as a man 'for whom the exterior world exists.' He meant to stress the attention he devoted to concrete verbal entities, pictures in language of mountains, fields, and peasants at work; an attention which involves not only the naming of the things in the world, but the sensuous grasp of them, so that we feel their presence—the surging ocean as a woman struggling to give birth. (He also meant to point fun at writers and artists who gave no sense of the real world.) When a poet (Alfred Noyes) describes a road 'as a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor' he is describing the concreteness of the road more tangibly than could any engineer, who gives us the dimensions and constituents of the road. Concreteness in language needs to put you into things and places so that you believe in their existence.