

Definition Essay

What is a Definition Essay?

A definition essay is writing that explains what a term means. Some terms have definite, concrete meanings, such as glass, book, or tree. Terms such as honesty, honor, or love are abstract and depend more on a person's point of view.

Three Steps to Effective Definition

1. Tell readers what term is being defined.
2. Present clear and basic information.
3. Use facts, examples, or anecdotes that readers will understand.

Choosing a Definition

Choosing a definition is a key step in writing a definition essay. You need to understand the term before you can define it for others. Read the dictionary, but don't just copy the definition. Explain the term briefly in your own words. Also, it's important to limit your term before you start defining it. For example, you could write forever on the term "love." To limit it, you would write about either "romantic love," "platonic love," or "first love."

Thesis Statement of a Definition Essay

The thesis statement usually identifies the term being defined and provides a brief, basic definition.

(term) (basic definition)

Ex: *Assertiveness (term) is standing up for your rights (basic definition).*

How To Write an Effective Definition

1. Create a definition. There are several ways to define a term. Here are a few options.
 - Define by function. Explain what something does or how something works.
 - Define by structure. Tell how something is organized or put together.
 - Define by analysis. Compare the term to other members of its class and then illustrate the differences. These differences are special characteristics that make the term stand out. For example, compare a Siberian husky to other dogs, such as lap dogs, mutts, or sporting dogs.
(term) (precise definition)
Ex: *A Siberian husky is a dog reputed for its ability to tolerate cold, its distinctive features, and its keen strength and stamina.*
 - Define by what the term does not mean. This distinction can sometimes clarify a definition and help a reader to better understand it.
2. Use understandable facts, examples, or anecdotes. Select facts, examples, or anecdotes to fully explain your definition. Ask yourself, "Which examples will best help readers understand the term? What examples would most appeal to my readers? Will a brief story reveal the term's meaning?" Do not use any examples that will not support the definition.

Cause and Effect Essay

What is a cause and effect essay?

Cause and effect essays are concerned with why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects). Cause and effect is a common method of organizing and discussing ideas.

Follow these steps when writing a cause and effect essay

- Distinguish between cause and effect. To determine causes~ ask~ "Why did this happen?" To identify effects~ ask~ "What happened because of this?"

- Sometimes~ many causes contribute to a single effect:

Causes

liked business in high school

salaries in the field are high

have an aunt who is an accountant

am good with numbers

Effect

choose to major in accounting

- Sometimes many effects may result from a single cause.

Cause

reduce work hours

Effects

less income

employer is irritated

more time to relax

more time for family and friends

2003 North Carolina Writing Grade 10

On August 20, 1999, CNN published an article titled, "*Television's Effects on Kids: It Can be Harmful*", by Dr. Daphne Miller.

The article stated that the "average child in the United States spends about 25 hours a week in front of the television (including the use of VCR), according to the latest annual *Media in the Home* survey, conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center - a number significantly exceeding the maximum limit suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)."

"Over the past several decades a number of studies have shown that there are several ways that television can be harmful to the mental and physical health of children. That's not to say that all television is bad for kids. In fact, a number of quality children's shows ... engage kids in positive ways. However, when children watch television frequently and indiscriminately, the effects can be detrimental." For example:

- "The *Media in the Home* survey found that 28 percent of all children's shows contained four or more incidents of violence per show - a number that media experts consider high."
- "There appears to be a strong relationship between time spent in front of the television and being overweight."
- "TV watching (especially late-night and violent shows) has been connected with poor sleep patterns in children."

Using the information presented, your own experience, observations, and/or readings, write a speech to present to your community's elementary and middle school Parent/Guardian Associations in which you examine the harmful effects of children watching too much television.

As you write your speech, remember to:

- Focus on the harmful effects of children watching too much television.
- Consider the purpose, audience, and context of your speech.
- Organize your ideas and details effectively.
- Include specific details that clearly develop your speech.
- Edit your speech for standard grammar and language usage.

Use the blank sheet of paper given to you by your teacher to plan your speech. Anything you write on the blank sheet will not be scored. Write the final copy of your speech in the test booklet.

2004 North Carolina Writing Grade 10

Read the following quotations about integrity, which is the firm adherence to a code of special moral or artistic values.

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

Don Miguel Ruiz, The Four Agreements

So live that you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

Will Rogers

Having integrity ... means being completely true to what is inside you-to what you know is right. .. what you feel you must do, regardless of the immediate cost of sacrifice ... to be honorable and to behave decently.

Samuel Golden, 1960

Integrity without knowing is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.

Samuel Johnson, Rasselas. 1759

Write a speech for your high school graduating class on the **meaning** of integrity. You may use the ideas presented above, your own experiences, observations, and/or readings.

As you write your speech, remember to:

- Focus on the meaning of integrity.
- Consider the audience, purpose, and context of your speech.
- Organize the ideas and details effectively.
- Include specific examples that clearly develop your speech.
- Edit your speech for standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Use the blank sheet of paper given to you by your teacher to plan your speech. Anything you write on the blank sheet will not be scored. You must write the final copy of your speech in the test booklet.

2005 North Carolina Writing Grade 10

Write an article for a school newspaper about the meaning of individuality as it relates to being a member of a group. You may use the following information, your own experiences, observations, and/or readings.

Individuality: 1. The quality of being individual: distinctiveness. 2. The aggregate of qualities and characteristics that distinguish one from others.

Source: *Webster's II New College Dictionary*

To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.

Source: Confucius

It is not worth an intelligent man's time to be in the majority. By definition, there are already enough people to do that.

Source: G.H. Hardy

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got.

Source: Janis Joplin

The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual-for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.

Source: Scott Peck

The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which makes you lonely.

Source: Lorraine Hansberry

No snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible.

Source: Voltaire

• aggregate: whole sum or amount

As you write an article for a school newspaper about the meaning of individuality as it relates to being a member of a group, remember to:

- o Focus on the meaning of individuality as it relates to being a member of a group.
- o Consider the purpose, audience, and context of your article.
- o Organize your article so that your ideas progress logically.
- o Include relevant details that clearly develop your article.
- o Edit your article for standard grammar and language usage.

Use the blank sheet of paper given to you by your teacher to plan your article. Anything you write on the blank sheet will not be scored. You must write the final copy of your article in the . test booklet.

4.

2006 North Carolina General Writing Assessment Grade 10

Write a letter to your local school board explaining the effects of a "no-pass, no-play" policy on the students in your school. You may use the following information, your own experiences, observations, and/or readings.

"No pass, no play," of course, is the popular slogan for a policy that requires students to maintain passing grades in their core academic subjects to be eligible to participate in a school's extracurricular activities. The slogan lumps together student athletes and all other students who represent the school in interschool competitions, from members of the drill team and pep squad to contestants in drama and chess ...

Recent public debate about the "no pass, no play" policy, especially in the legislature and the media, proceeded without reliable evidence about the effect of the policy on individual students, in individual schools, and in schools across the state ...

Source: O.L. Davis Jr., Editor, *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*

In 1984, "Texas became the first state to impose academic eligibility requirements to participate in athletics. Since then nearly thirty states have established similar academic minimums, with many expanding the scope to include student participation in all extracurricular activities."

Source: National Association of State Boards of Education

"Educational decision makers must look at the consequences of denying students the right to participate to get them to work harder in the classroom ... These kinds of exclusionary policies may well damage overall achievement and work against those students who could benefit most directly from involvement."

Source: John Holloway, "Extracurricular Activities: The Path to Academic Success?"

As you write a letter to your local school board explaining the effects of a "no...pass, no-play" policy on the students in you school, remember to

- o Focus on the issue of a "no-pass, no-play" policy and the effects it has on students.
- o Consider the purpose, audience, and context of your letter.
- o Organize your letter so that your ideas progress logically.
- o Include relevant details that clearly develop your letter.
- o Edit your letter for standard grammar and language usage.

Use the blank sheet of paper given to you by your teacher to plan your letter. Anything you write on the blank sheet will not be scored. You must write the final copy of your letter on pages 3 and 4 of your test booklet.

5.

2007 North Carolina Testing Program

Writing, Grade 10

Write an article for a school newspaper about the meaning of human rights (rights that should be given to all people simply because they are human). You may use the following information, your own experiences, observations, and/or readings.

Right: That which is just, legal, morally good, or appropriate.

Source: *Webster's II New College Dictionary*

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Source: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
The First Three Articles*

This must be a world of democracy and respect for human rights, a world freed from the horrors of poverty, hunger, deprivation and ignorance, relieved of the threat and the scourge of civil wars and external aggression and unburdened of the great tragedy of millions forced to become refugees .

. . . The normal condition for human existence is democracy, justice, peace, non-racism, non-sexism, prosperity for everybody, a healthy environment and quality and solidarity among the peoples.

Source: Nelson Mandela, *Nobel Peace Prize Address*

Write an article for your school newspaper on the effects of technology on everyday life. You may use the following information, your own experiences, observations, and/or readings.

We've arranged a civilization in which most crucial elements profoundly depend on science and technology. We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. This is a prescription for disaster. We might get away with it for a while, but sooner or later this combustible mixture of ignorance and power is going to blow up in our faces.

Source: *Carl Sagan*

We are the children of a technological age. We have found streamlined ways of doing much of our routine work. Printing is no longer the only way of reproducing books. Reading them, however, has not changed.

Source: *Lawrence Clark Powell*

Information and communications technology unlocks the value of time, allowing and enabling multi-tasking, multi-channels, multi-this and multi-that.

Source: *Li Ka Shing*

Many people see technology as the problem behind the so-called digital divide [the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not]. Others see it as the solution. Technology is neither. It must operate in conjunction with business, economic, political and social system[s].

Source: *Carly Fiorina*

As you write an article for your school newspaper on the effects of technology on everyday life, remember to

- Focus on the effects of technology on everyday life.
- Consider the purpose, audience, and context of your article.
- Organize your article so that your ideas progress logically.
- Include relevant details to clearly develop your article.
- Edit your article for standard grammar and language usage.

Use the blank sheet of paper given to you by your teacher to plan your article. Anything you write on the blank sheet will not be scored. You must write the final copy of your article on pages 3 and 4 of your test booklet.

Write the final copy of your article on pages 3 and 4 of your test booklet.