**Mrs. Graves**

**English II**

**Paper 2**

**Definition Essay**

**Paper Length:** 2-3 pages (6+ paragraphs)

**Sources Due:** Monday, 10 September

**Works Cited Due:** Wednesday, 12 September

**Rough Draft Due:** Friday, 14 September **(2 copies)**

**Final Draft Due Date:**Monday, 24 September **(1 copy)**

**Purpose:** to better understand our language, to learn how to use words correctly, to gain an understanding of how words change over time, to better understand translation of old texts, to see the evolution of words in order to help with understanding Old, Middle, Early Modern and Modern English.

**I. A definition essay defines a word, term, or concept in depth by providing a personal commentary on what the specific subject means.**

1. Most physical objects have a definition about which most people agree.
   1. Most people will agree on what trees, windows, computers, and pencils are in general.
   2. These objects all have specific physical properties that most people can agree on through the use of their physical senses.
2. However, abstract terms, such as *love, pain,* or *patriotism*, have different meanings for different individuals since such terms play on people’s feelings more than their physical senses.
3. The definition essay provides a personal, extended definition of such terms by linking or comparing the term to a previous definition and by illustrating how that term should be applied.

**II. Setting up the definition essay**

1. Once you have selected a subject, outline your paper carefully before writing.
   1. Outlining will help you determine the specific points you want to cover in the definition and point out where you need examples.

**III. Writing the definition essay**

1. Make sure that you have a good, specific thesis that tells readers just how you will define the term.
2. Follow your outline to remind yourself when you need examples and analysis of those examples.
   1. Modify your outline when you think you need to.
   2. Remember not to paragraph based on your outline's points.
3. Use good, specific examples to illustrate each point.
   1. Examples allow readers to visualize how the definition can be applied.
   2. You may need to do research to find good examples.
4. Provide good transitions to link all parts of the essay.
5. Have a strong conclusion that brings the parts of the definition together and leaves readers with an image of how the definition is applied.
6. Proofread carefully. (Ex. use personal pronouns in anecdotes only)

**GENERAL DEFINITION PAPER OUTLINE:**

1. Introduction: Attention Getter
2. Anecdote: You might want to write a brief story to illustrate your word.
   1. You may want to include the traditional or dictionary definition here to provide a basis for your personal definition.
   2. You may want to open with a contradictory image to what would be your image to illustrate that definition. (What the word *does not* mean.)
3. Thesis: State how you define the term with an essay map. If you can write the definition using specific points, you will find the definition easier to follow when writing the paper.

II. Body

1. Background information: History of the word (etymology)
   1. Where did this word originate? When?
   2. What are the root words? What do they mean?
   3. How has the word been used in literature or in quotes?
   4. How has the meaning of the word changed over time? (Ex. “scan”)
2. Point one
   1. The first part of your definition of the term.
   2. Example to illustrate that point.
   3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.
3. Point two
   1. The second part of the definition of the term.
   2. Example to illustrate that point.
   3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.
4. Point three
   1. The third part of the definition (if there is one)
   2. Example to illustrate that point.
   3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

III. Conclusion

1. Review your definition’s main points
2. Closing attention getter
   1. Sometimes a reference back to the opening attention-getter is a good way of unifying the entire essay.
   2. You may want to close with an explanation of how your definition has affected you.

**SAMPLE DEFINITION PAPER OUTLINE: (Patriotism)**

1. Introduction
   1. Attention getter: Anecdote about patriotism (as perceived in an image-ex. flag)
   2. Thesis: Patriotism is speaking out when a person feels the country is right or wrong, voting, campaigning, and respecting others.
2. Body
   1. History and Background
      1. "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" [Nathan Hale *prior to his execution by the British in 1776*]
      2. 1726, from patriot + -ism.
   2. Speaking out when country is wrong
      1. Vietnam
      2. Slavery
      3. Women’s right to vote
   3. Speaking out when country is right
      1. Afghanistan
      2. Health care
   4. Voting
      1. Making a choice based on one’s needs
      2. Being involved in the voting process
   5. Campaigning
      1. Finding a candidate who represents country’s needs
   6. Respecting others
      1. Paying taxes.
      2. Respecting others’ points of view
      3. Arab-American prejudice after 9/11.
3. Conclusion
   1. Review of patriot as protestor, voter, and respectful citizen.
   2. Closing attention getter: return to introduction's image of patriot.

**Topic Suggestions: Extended Definitions**

1. Kindness
2. Honor
3. Modesty
4. Humility
5. Dedication
6. Sensitivity
7. Trust
8. Respect
9. Ambition
10. Generosity
11. Laziness
12. Charisma
13. Maturity
14. Integrity
15. Frustration
16. Optimism
17. Liberal
18. Conservative
19. Courage
20. Citizenship
21. Success
22. Intelligence
23. Personality
24. Leadership
25. Persistence
26. Responsibility
27. Sophistication
28. Heroism
29. Thrift
30. Sloth
31. Vanity
32. Pride
33. Beauty
34. Greed
35. Virtue
36. Progress