

The Extended Definition of a Value

This project is an extended definition of a value requiring several examples and extensive detail.

def-i-ni-tion (def' e-nish' en) n **1.** The act of defining a word, phrase or term **2.** The act of making clear and distinct **3.** A determining of outline, extent, or limits.

Consider the following guidelines to success as you write your definition essay: make your essay personal, vigorous, stimulating, memorable. Choose a value you strongly support or strongly negate and have a strong interest in. Include each and every component listed on the grade sheet as required.

Types of Definitions Traditionally Used in Definition Essays

The true "extended definition" helps clarify the meaning for your reader, so your project will employ each of these traditional types of defining:

- Denotation/Connotation
- Analysis
- Classification
- Origin/Etymology
- Function
- Synonyms
- Comparison/Contrast
- Description
- Negation/Differentiation
- Cause/Effect
- Narration/Illustration

Definition Essay Process

Complete the following fifteen (15) steps in the process of collecting details for your definition essay:

1. **Select a VALUE that you plan to investigate.** The VALUE should have some interest, importance, or meaning to you personally. Example: Individual rights, Individualism.
2. Begin by **writing down a few simple statements about your word:** "*Individualism is...*"
Give the surface meaning -- what everybody assumes it to mean.
3. Now record the word's dictionary definition and the source of the information.
4. Classify your word:
Part of Speech: non, verb, adjective, adverb
General Type: character trait, political term, value, kind of value (i.e. paramount), religion, literary term etc.
Connotations: the "emotional" meanings that come to mind, the meanings we "argue" about
5. **Trace the etymology** -- Look at the source of the word or concept, e.g. leader: the word lead comes from the Anglo Saxon "laedan" or "lithan" meaning "to travel or go," and so a leader can be described as one who determines a way of traveling or going.
6. Function (process): **explain what the value "does" or how it works**
7. From a thesaurus, make a list of between 10 and 20 words that have similar meanings.
8. Comparison/Contrast: **Comparison:** relate it to something in its class which is similar. Use analogy -- relate it to something that comes from another class, yet still bears instructive similarities, perhaps in a simile or metaphor. **Contrast:** tell what a word is not -- i.e. serious argument is not name calling or mere rationalizing.

9. Cause and effect -- explain what causes it or what effects it brings about.
Effect/cause example: Stress is the body's nonspecific response to any demand made upon it.
10. Differentiate:
- Write out a series of **negative definitions**: (Individualism is not...)
 - Make a list of subtle and **borderline comparisons**: (Individualism may seem similar to freedom, but..)
11. Illustrate: Include at least two **extended examples which illustrate the word**:
- sermonillustrations.com
 - inspirationalstories.com
12. Include at least **five quotes that others have made about your value choice**. Include the name and location of the quote (i.e. Thomas Jefferson observed in *Thoughts about Government*.)
13. Discover and include at least **three Supreme Court cases** that further establish the value as accepted or negated by the American judicial system - Copy and paste.
<http://lawcrawler.findlaw.com/scripts/lc.pl?entry=individualism&sites=findlaw>

In the first search box, enter your value; in the second, enter US SUPREME COURT

Write the name of the case, the decision, the court, and a summary of what the Court heard and why it ruled the way it did. SC cases are underlined.

General site address: **http://supreme.lp.findlaw.com/supreme_court/resources.html**

14. Include a printed example of at least **ONE political, editorial cartoon** to lend further support or negation to your value.

This site is a good place to start: **<http://www.jeff-macnelly.com/jeff-macnelly-pulitzer.htm>**

Here's another site: **<http://www.ucomics.com/tomthedancingbug/index.phtml>**

And other archived sites, cartoons archived by topics:

<http://www.geoffhook.com/archive/topics.html>

<http://www.globecartoon.com/chapp/index.html>

<http://politicalhumor.about.com/es/cartoonsites/>

15. After your research, determine a particular thesis or main idea about your word. This sentence will be the **FIRST SENTENCE** that will introduce your project.

Thesis pattern: _____ (term) is not merely _____ (surface meaning), but rather, it is _____ (set up your entire discussion).

Example: Love is not just an emotion or feeling that too soon changes, but rather, the act of choosing to do what is in the best interest of the loved one "over the long haul" despite the cost to oneself and without expecting anything in return.