

Writer: _____

Extended Definition Essay

In your next writing assignment, you will be able to choose an abstract concept to define in detail. Your essay should explain your unique opinion on the concept you chose—your definition should differ from what others might say or vary from the simple dictionary definition.

It should also include various strategies of definition (definition by function, example, structure, background and/or negation). Be as specific and detailed as possible; go beyond the obvious and give specific examples that illuminate your unique definition of the word. The final extended definition essay should be about 2 pages, typed and double spaced.

Structure: **Introduction**—Hook, background/context, thesis (your unique definition)

Body Paragraphs—Topic sentences, definition strategies (evidence), analysis of how your evidence proves your thesis

Conclusion—Summarize your extended definition and highlight the ways your definition is different, leave readers with a statement of the definition’s importance—the “so what?”

Criteria	Points	Comments
The introduction grabs the reader’s attention and clearly states an interesting thesis that clearly and uniquely defines your chosen concept.	/5	
Each body paragraph contains a clear and concise topic sentence and smoothly transitions from idea to idea.	/5	
The thesis is clearly supported by a variety of appropriate evidence, including definition by example, function, structure, background, and/or negation . A variety of relevant details from text, personal experience, and society richly enhance the writer’s definition. The commentary convincingly develops the thesis.	/5	
The conclusion summarizes the definition and explains its uniqueness and importance.	/5	
The writing is smooth, skillful, and coherent throughout. Diction is sophisticated and appropriate for an academic audience.	/5	
The writing is free of grammar/mechanics errors. The writer avoids use of 2 nd person pronouns and smoothly embeds quotations into the text.	/5	
Rough draft is included and edited. Editing sheet is complete.	/10	
Total	/40	

Possible topics for an extended definition essay:

1. Love
2. Hope
3. Independence
4. Injustice
5. Freedom
6. Education
7. Patriotism
8. Pain
9. Courage
10. Honor
11. Work
12. Responsibility
13. Beauty
14. Kindness
15. Compassion
16. Sexism
17. Gumption
18. Racism
19. Sportsmanship
20. Modesty
21. Self-assurance
22. Humility
23. Dedication
24. Sensitivity
25. Trust
26. Respect
27. Ambition
28. Right to privacy
29. Generosity
30. Laziness
31. Charisma
32. Common sense
33. Team player
34. Maturity
35. Integrity
36. Healthy appetite
37. Frustration
38. Optimism
39. Sense of humor
40. A teacher
41. Physical fitness
42. Marriage
43. True friendship
44. Courage
45. Citizenship
46. Success
47. A coach
48. Intelligence
49. Personality
50. Peer pressure
51. Cruelty
52. Leadership
53. Persistence
54. Responsibility
55. Human rights
56. Sophistication
57. Self-respect
58. Comfort Food
59. A nerd/geek
60. Heroism
61. Thrift
62. Sloth
63. Vanity
64. Pride
65. Greed
66. Virtue
67. Progress
68. A parent
69. A fan
70. A good student
71. A good boss

Julius Caesar-specific ideas

- Ambition
- Honor
- Tyranny
- A true friend
- A good politician
- A good spouse
- Cowardice
- Superstition
- Heroism
- Patriotism
- Traitor
- Trust
- Guilt
- Loyalty
- Betrayal
- Revenge
- Deceit

WAYS TO DEFINE

Define by...

- Example—Use examples from life and from literature to illustrate your definition
- Negation—Define what the topic is NOT so you can clarify what it is; helps contrast your definition with others' definitions
- Structure—Break into parts and define each part
- Function—Describe how it works in the real world, giving specific information
- Background—Give history of the word or idea

