

Definition Essay: Pre-Writing Worksheet

You will write a FIVE-paragraph definition essay. Use this worksheet to develop your ideas before you begin drafting.

1. Choose Your Topic

What word, term, phrase, concept, or object will you define?

Ideas: family, love, friendship, home, faith, a favorite activity or hobby, an idiom, or a phrase you use often.

My topic:

2. What Does It Mean to You?

Write a working definition in your own words. Don't worry about making it perfect yet.

3. Brainstorm: What Makes This Topic What It Is?

List characteristics, qualities, examples, experiences, or parts of your topic. These ideas can become the three main points of your essay.

Possible Main Point #1	Possible Main Point #2	Possible Main Point #3

4. Develop Your Three Body Paragraphs

For each main point, brainstorm specific details, examples, experiences, or explanations that will help your reader understand your definition.

Body Paragraph 1

Main point:	
Example/detail:	
Why does this help define my topic?	

Body Paragraph 2

Main point:	
Example/detail:	
Why does this help define my topic?	

Body Paragraph 3

Main point:	
Example/detail:	

Why does this help define my topic?	
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5. Your Thesis

Turn your three main points into one clear statement about your topic. Your thesis should tell the reader the specific way you will define the topic.

6. Plan Your Five Paragraphs

Paragraph	What will I include?
1. Introduction	Introduce the topic, provide context, and end with my thesis.
2. Body Paragraph 1	Explain my first main point with specific details/examples.
3. Body Paragraph 2	Explain my second main point with specific details/examples.
4. Body Paragraph 3	Explain my third main point with specific details/examples.
5. Conclusion	Restate my main idea and leave the reader with a final thought.

Before you draft: Make sure your three body paragraphs clearly connect to your thesis. Your job is not just to give a dictionary definition. Your goal is to explain what your topic means and help your reader understand it through your ideas and examples.