Main Difference

Define vs Describe

Define and describe are two words that are commonly used in the English language. Although many people assume that there is no difference between define and describe, these two verbs have some subtle differences. Define means to state exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of something whereas describe means to give a detailed account of something. Therefore, the main difference between define and describe is that defining would give a general meaning whereas describing would give a detailed account.

Describe – Meaning and Usage

Describe means to give a detailed verbal account of something. A description will list some of the properties or features of a thing. We often describe things so that the readers/listeners recognize or identify it. For example, if we are to describe a cat, we would talk about its physical appearance, behavior, actions, skills, history, etc.

We usually use the word *describe* to refer to an event, incident, a thing, idea, or person. When we describe the physical appearance of a person, we will mainly talk about the physical features of that person, the clothes he is wearing, his posture, etc.

If we are asked to describe an incident, we will talk about where and when that incident took place, what exactly happened, who was involved, what was the reactions of the people, how did you feel, etc.

Define – Meaning and Usage

Define means to describe or state exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of something. In order to create a definition, one must have a close understanding of the thing whose name is being defined. A definition contains the general meaning and sometimes the essential characteristics of the defined term. For example, look at the definitions of *cat* taken from several dictionaries.

Difference Between Define and Describe Meaning

Define: Define means to describe or state exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of something.

Describe: Describe means to give a detailed verbal account of something.

Content

Define: A definition gives the general meaning and the basic characteristics that identify the defined thing.

Describe: A description has more details than a definition.

Information

Define: A definition provides a general idea about something.

Describe: A description gives more details about something.