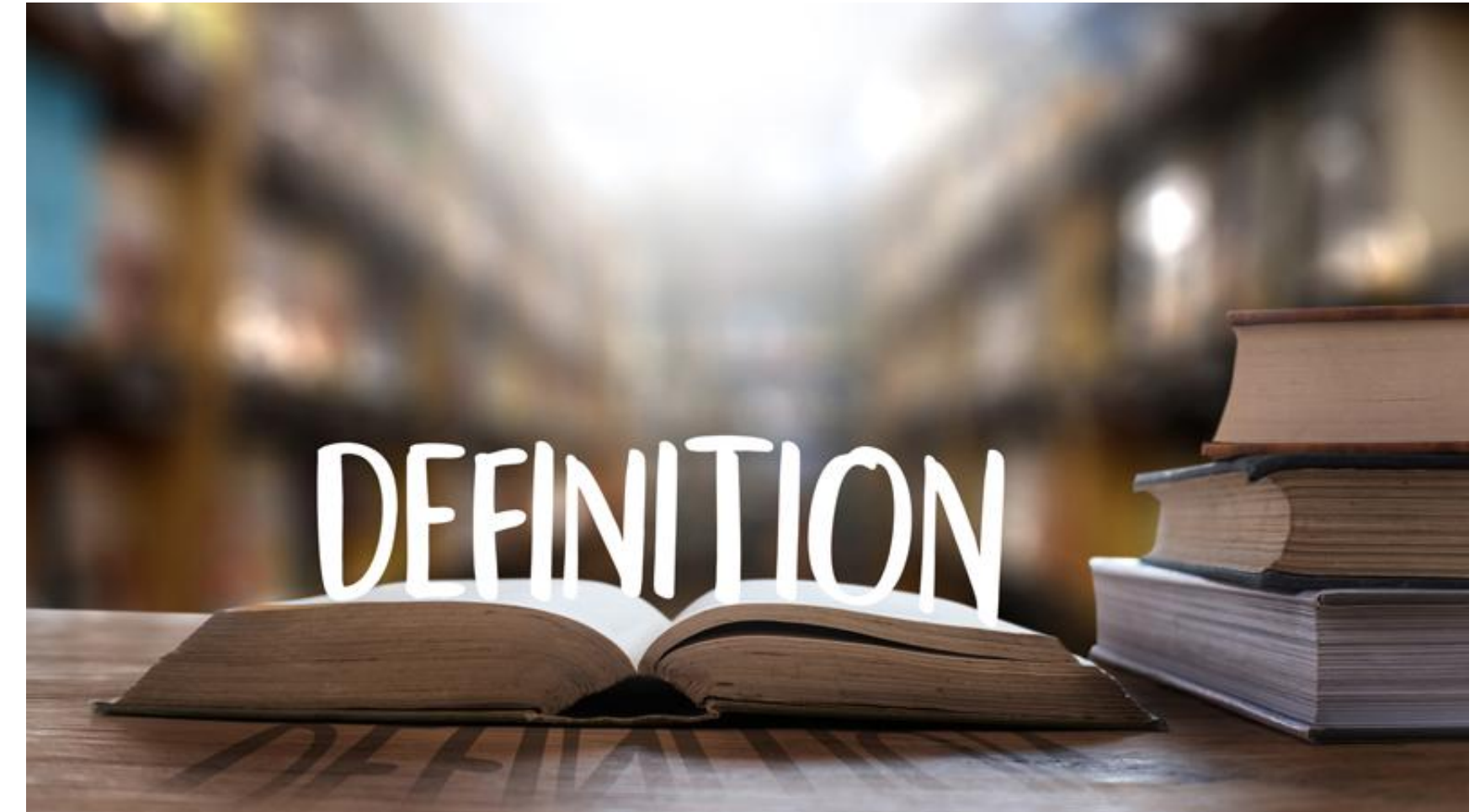


Definition

- **Introduction to Definition**
- **Samples of definition writing**
- **Class Work: definition writing**



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Introduction to DEFINITION

■ What is definition? (P188)

A definition answers the question of “what is it?” Definition is a very important form of expository writing, a method we use to distinguish one thing from all other things, so that we can make intelligent judgements and take appropriate actions.

■ What is the purpose of definitions? (P188)

- To clarify an abstract or controversial term or concept;**
- To explain a jargon in some academic discipline;**
- To inform and entertain your readers, etc.**

Introduction to DEFINITION

■ Types of definition? (P189)

Depending on how much information is needed to clarify the term, a definition can be classified into two types: **sentence definition** and **extended definition**.

Samples of sentence definition

1. A tornado may be identified as a strong dangerous wind which form itself into an upside-down spinning cone and is able to destroy buildings as it moves across the ground.

2. A rainforest is a forest in a tropical area which receives a lot of rain.

- ***Read these two sentences and tell:***
- What term is defined?***
 - What class does this term belong to? And***
 - What characteristics does it have?***



Introduction to DEFINITION

■ SENTENCE definition (P189):

➤ It includes 4 parts:

- 1) *the term to be defined;*
- 2) *a be verb (usually “is” or “are”);*
- 3) *a general class that the term belongs to;*
- 4) *features and characteristics that distinguish the term from others in the same class.*

➤ Commonly used sentence strategies:

- 1) *a be verb;*
- 2) *a dash (--);*
- 3) *a subordinate clause (attributive clause 定语从句, adverbial clause of time 时间状语从句)*
- 4) *an appositive phrase 同位短语;*
- 5) *phrases like “identify as”, “define as”, “refer to”, and “consist in”, etc.*

A **tornado** may be identified as a strong dangerous **wind** which form itself into an **upside-down spinning cone** and is able to **destroy buildings** as it moves across the ground.

Class work

■ Sentence definition writing (P192 - ACTIVITY 6):

➤ Commonly used sentence strategies:

1) a be verb; 2) a dash (--); 3) a subordinate clause (attributive clause定语从句, adverbial clause of time时间状语从句); 5) phrases like “identify as”, “define as”, “refer to”, and “consist in”, etc.

Ambition: Ambition is an ardent desire to achieve a specific objective.

Success: There is no such thing as standard success -- being able to give full play to what you are capable of means you are a successful person.

Happiness: Happiness is a feeling of contentment that you get when you have all your needs satisfied.

Introduction to DEFINITION

■ **EXTENDED definition (P190-191):**

➤ **Strategies:**

- 1) Describe the features and parts of the subject, or the class the subject belongs to;*
- 2) Give examples;*
- 3) Compare and contrast;*
- 4) Trace the subject's history or development;*
- 5) Analyze the subject's causes and effects;*
- 6) Discuss the subject's etymology or origin.*

Class work

■ Extended definition writing (P196 - ACTIVITY 10):

Extend the definition by adding a real, specific **example** to illustrate your understanding of the term.

Success:

*There is no such thing as standard success -- being able to give full play to what you are capable of means you are a successful person. **Success is when you summon up the courage to ask your date out for a dinner; success is when you upload your very first TikTok video; success is when you make up your mind to end a stupid relationship and never look back.***

Class work

■ Extended definition writing (P197 - ACTIVITY 11):

Extend the definition by **comparing** the term to something similar or contrast it with what it is not.

Happiness:

*Happiness is a feeling of contentment that you get when you have all your needs satisfied. **The surest way to happiness is to keep your expectations low. do not aim too high when you are not completely ready; just do the best you can and always prepare for the worst; do not overthink when your boyfriend or girlfriend doesn't text you back; just focus on your life and keep being fabulous.***

Pitfalls and Strategies (P191)

- When writing definitions, remember to avoid the following problems:

- 1. Avoid unnecessary dictionary definitions***
- 2. Avoid circular definition***

- Read the following sentences, and then decide whether they are good definitions or not. If they are, point out the techniques; if not, explain why.

1) The compact disc used with computers is like a phonograph record on which data are stored.

- ***A good definition. To define the term, the writer relates it to something familiar or already known.***

Pitfalls and Strategies (P191)

- **Read the following sentences, and then decide whether they are good definitions or not. If they are, point out the techniques; if not, explain why.**

2) Computer literacy is the state of being literate about computers.

➤ ***Circular definition. It tends to go in circles, i.e., it defines the term with the term itself as if it were listing its defining characteristics.***

**** Relate the term to something familiar or already known, either positively or negatively (A is like B, or A is unlike B).***

Pitfalls and Strategies (P191)

- Read the following sentences, and then decide whether they are good definitions or not. If they are, point out the techniques; if not, explain why.

3) Love means positive feeling for someone else.

- Inadequate definition. The term “love” is not adequately differentiated from other similar feelings.

*** Be more specific.**

4) Happiness is when you get a scholarship from the university.

- Not a good definition. It uses an example to serve as a definition, but it fails to define by putting the term in a class or category and then differentiating it from others in that category.

*** Give a brief explanation.**

Mid-term examination

➤ **Type of test: paper-based test**

➤ **What to be covered:**

(2-3 WRITING tasks out of the following)

1. process analysis

2. cause and effect

3. comparison and contrast

4. definition