ADVANCED PLACEMENT **ENGLISH**

**The Logical Definition**

A LOGICAL DEFINITION is a statement of the meaning of a word or word group in which the word or group is identified as the TERM, is placed in a CLASS, and is supplied with sufficient DIFFERENTIAE to eliminate all other members of the class.

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| TERM: | The name of the thing, person, or idea to be defined |
| CLASS: | A group into which the term fits |
| DIFFERENTIÆ: | Characteristics that differentiate the term from all other members of the class. |

*Examples*

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| Term | Class | Differentiae |
| 1. Stockholm | capital | of Sweden. |
| 1. kite | light frame | covered with paper or cloth and designed to be flown in the air at the of a string. |
| 1. geek | circus performer | often billed as a wild man whose act usually includes biting the head off a live chicken or snake. |
| 1. dollar | monetary unit | of New Zealand, equal to 100 cents. |

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| **Fallacies in logical definitions** |  |

The Class

1. Too restrictive: if it eliminates the term itself or any part of it. (A magnet is a piece of iron that attracts other pieces of iron.)
2. Too inclusive: if it does not sufficiently restrict the class. (A glowworm is a little thing that gives off light.)

The Differentiæ

1. Too broad: if they allow the inclusion of members of the class other than the term. (A touchdown is a scoring play in football.)
2. Too inclusive: if they eliminate the term itself or any desired part of it. (A copyreader is one who reads copy for a newspaper.)

Circularity

Circular definitions: A definition is said to be “circular,” and therefore inadequate, if it repeats the term or depends on a word lexically related to the term. (*e.g.,* A diagonal line is a line that runs diagonally.)

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| Testing by inversion: |  |

You can frequently test the logical completeness of a logical definition by inverting it according to these formulæ:

“Any/all” + [the class] + [the differentiæ] = [the term]

“Any/all” + [the term] = [the class] + [the differentiæ]

If the result is not “true,” the definition needs more careful examination.

PRACTICE ONE: For the following logical definitions list the term and the class.

1. A ewer is a large, wide mouthed water pitcher.
2. A four poster is a bedstead with tall cornerposts that sometimes support a canopy of curtains.
3. A squeegee is a tool in the shape of a T having the crossbar edged with a strip of rubber or the like used to scrape water from a flat surface.
4. A theist is a person who believes in the existence of a god or gods.
5. An ape hanger is a handle bar that is unusually high, especially on a motorcycle.
6. A slumlord is a landlord who receives unusually high profits from substandard property.

PRACTICE TWO: For the following, identify the term, the class, and the differentiæ.

1. Two or more letters united in printing are called a ligature.
2. A metaphor is a figure of speech that implies a comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common.
3. Letterhead is stationery with a printed or engraved heading.
4. The literary language of tenth and eleventh century Slavic manuscripts is called Old Church Slavonic.
5. A gargoyle is a roof spout carved to represent a grotesque human or animal figure.
6. The Greek goddess of wisdom and the arts is Athena.

PRACTICE THREE: For the following inadequate definitions, identify the problem and suggest a repair.

1. A fledgling has newly developed flight feathers.
2. John Doe is used in legal proceedings to designate fictitious or unidentified persons.
3. A plutocracy is a form of government.
4. A kilt is a short pleated thing reaching to the knees, worn by men of the Scottish highlands.
5. Avarice is the vice characteristic of avaricious persons.
6. Italian is a European Romance language.

PRACTICE FOUR: Write a complete logical definition for each of six terms. Choose four from the list below and two from a field in which you are interested.

* concerto
* judo
* Aristotle
* speakeasy
* Pasadena
* Shakespeare
* soldier
* cafeteria
* toucan
* impeachment
* Christmas
* Huck Finn

PRACTICE FIVE: Choose one of the following groups and write a logical definition for each term in the group

GROUP 1. duck, Adam, Tiger, Sacramento, big top

GROUP 2. alligator, Bordeaux, ruble, photosynthesis, sign language.

GROUP 3. cola, basset, Anaheim, Michelangelo, KCET.

GROUP 4. Delphi, mononucleosis, brewery, pistol, Chaucer

GROUP 5. spaghetti, Leningrad, hostage, James Earl Jones, dowry

GROUP 6. Frank Lloyd Wright, ash, Omaha, lathe, merry go round

Some definitions... logical and otherwise

1. Coal is a black rocky type substance which can be burned to produce heat.
2. A junior high school is an educational institution which teaches students from eleven years old to fourteen years old.
3. A flying buttress is an architectural device used to support or hold up buildings.
4. A fork is a utensil used for eating.
5. A leprechaun is a fairy-tale creature who, when spotted by a person, must grant them three wishes.
6. Socialization is a process in which a person learns the traditions, customs, and accepted behaviors of the group in which he lives.
7. A myth is a story based on fact which tries to explain the phenomena which occur in a given environment.
8. A right angle is an angle which has a measure of ninety degrees or one half π radians.
9. A diamond is a precious gem found deep inside the earth's crust.
10. Copernicus was an ancient astronomer who was able to find orbital speeds and periods of the planets.
11. Paris is the largest city in France.
12. Junior high school is the educational step after grammar school preparing students for high school.
13. New Orleans is a city in Louisiana located at the mouth of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.
14. Washington, D.C., is the capital of the United States.
15. Halftime is the midpoint of a football game, preceded and followed by two periods of play, which lasts approximately twenty minutes.
16. Saturn is the sixth planet in our solar system.
17. Marijuana is an intoxicating drug obtained from the hemp plant and usually smoked.
18. An apple is a fruit that can be red, yellow, or green and grows on trees.
19. A balance sheet is a financial statement prepared at the end of a business period, either yearly or quarterly, to give a clear picture of a company's financial position.
20. A fork is a piece of silverware that has three or four prongs.
21. An hourly is a college exam weighted less than midterms or finals and more than quizzes.
22. A right angle is formed when two perpendicular lines intersect each other in a plane.
23. Illinois is a Midwestern state of the United States sharing borders with the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, and Indiana.
24. Greek mythology was a religion, practiced in ancient Greece, which consisted of many gods and goddesses.
25. A fork is an eating utensil with pointed prongs that is used to spear a piece of food an to put it in one's mouth.
26. Illinois is a state located in the Midwestern section of the United States.
27. A truck is a motorized vehicle having 4 wheels or more used for a variety of purposes, most having to do with hauling goods.
28. The Field Museum is a natural history museum in Chicago, Illinois, and is considered one of the finest in the world.
29. Athena is a goddess in Greek mythology who is associated with logic and wisdom.
30. The United States is a country in the northern hemisphere of Earth.

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The Paragraph of Extended Definition

Assignment: Write a one paragraph composition of extended definition. Your “thesis sentence” should be a logical definition of the term and should begin your paragraph. The body of your paragraph should clarify the term, class, and differentiæ. You may wish to make your development explanatory, historical, or analytical. You may want to use comparison or contrast. Your audience is a group of high school seniors of reasonable intelligence.

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| *Topic:* |  |

*Criteria:*

1. Is the logical definition clear, complete, and accurate
2. Is every sentence clearly relevant to the logical definition?
3. Does every sentence lead logically to the next?
4. Is the paragraph developed in a manner suitable to the term being defined?
5. Have the writers used the skills of sentence combining from last week to avoid strings of short, choppy statements?
6. Does the paragraph end rather than just stopping?
7. Is the spelling accurate and the sentence structure and punctuation correct?
8. Is there a variety of sentence beginnings to make the paper readable?
9. Have the writers avoided depending on linking verbs, especially forms of the verb 'to be'?
10. Is the factual development of the definition free of careless judgments and unsupported views?

*Process:*

Avoid turning in rough work. Write your logical definition and check it using the formula on page 1. Then decide on a method of development and outline your details. Arrange the details in a logical order, and write your draft. You will have time for only one draft today. Leave a minute or two to proofread for logic and mechanics.