**Title of assignment:** Definition and Example Essay

**Length:** 2 pages (non-researched) OR 3 pages plus Works Cited (researched)

**Due date:**

**Description of assignment:** Choose one of the terms below to define in a definition/example essay (SLO 2). This is not an *argument* essay, so you are not arguing for or against anything. The idea is also not to write a technical article; instead, use *denotation* and *connotation* together to *define* a term in such a way that your audience can easily understand. Your definition should include a *basic definition* as well as an *extended definition*, which may use specific examples, history, etymology, compare/contrast, and more. Organize your essay into an introduction, body paragraphs, and a short conclusion paragraph (SLO 3).

As you plan your essay, consider these questions: Why is it important to understand this term? Why is this term in the news right now? Why is it relevant to someone living in Louisiana? If a friend asked me what this term meant, how would I explain it?

In order to answer these questions to *define* your term, you should use specific, relevant *examples*. Each example should further your reader’s understanding of your term.

If choosing the research option, students will also evaluate, represent, and respond to the ideas and research of others while documenting sources (SLO 5).

The essay must be in MLA format with double spacing and Times New Roman 12-point font. The length of the essay should be between 2 and 4 full pages of text. Your essay should be free of grammar and spelling errors (SLO 6).

**Goal of assignment:**Define a term by providing a basic definition, an extended definition, and relevant specific examples.

**Skills we will work on with this paper:**

* definition
* examples/illustration
* research using scholarly sources (if writing the research option)
* MLA in-text citation
* works cited page
* emphatic-order organization (“save the best for last”)

**Suggestions for topics:**

1. Lagniappe 2. Laissez les bons temps rouler (non-researched)
2. Gerrymandering 2. Gentrification 3. Cultural Appropriation (researched)

**Rubric [with percentage breakdown for different aspects of evaluation/grade (%)]:**

Content = 30%

A: 30-27 points

Paper is creative and original

Student has clearly followed and met the assignment guidelines

B: 26-23 points

Paper is somewhat creative and original

Student has mostly followed and met the assignment guidelines

C: 22-19 points

Paper is unoriginal and ideas are obvious or general

Student has followed and met basic assignment guidelines

D: 18-15 points

Paper is unoriginal and ideas are obvious or general

Student has not followed and met the basic assignment

guidelines

F: 14-0 points

Paper contains few complete ideas

Student has not followed and met most of the basic assignment

Guidelines

Development = 30%

A: 30-27 points

Tone enhances the subject, conveys the writer’s attitude, and suits the audience

B: 26-23 points

Tone mostly fits the subject, the writer’s attitude is somewhat clear, and the tone is mostly suitable for the audience

C: 22-19 points

Tone is acceptable for the subject, writer’s attitude is not clear or consistent, and the tone may or may not be suitable for the audience

D: 18-15 points

Tone is not consistent with the subject, writer’s attitude is indeterminate, and tone is not appropriate for the audience

F: 14-0 points

Tone is not clear at all or does not make sense for the subject, writer’s attitude is indeterminate, and the tone risks disengaging the audience.

Structure = 20%

A: 20-18 points

Essay has a logical order and a clear sense of flow

Introduction is engaging, paragraphs are idea-centered, and

transitions are smooth

B: 17-16 points

Essay has a somewhat logical order and some sense of flow

Introduction is mostly engaging, paragraphs are mostly adhere to

their topics, and transitions are identifiable

C: 15-14 points

Essay does not have a logical order, though some order is

obvious

Introduction offers little insight, paragraphs stray off topic, and transitions can sometimes be evident

D:13-11 points

Essay structure seems random or chaotic, paragraphs lack

development, and transitions are missing or misleading

F: 10-0 points

Essay does not have any clear structure, paragraphs are not

developed, transitions are missing or misleading

Format = 10%

A: 10-9 points

Proper MLA format is evident

B: 8-7 points

Paper is mostly formatted correctly, but may contain minor errors

C: 6-5 points

Text contains greater than 3 kinds of formatting errors

D: 4-3 points

Formatting is problematic and has several major errors

F: 2-0 points

Formatting does not follow assignment guidelines

Grammar = 10%

A: 10-9 points

Paper has been carefully edited and contains only minor grammatical and/or spelling errors

B: 8-7 points

Paper has been edited, but may contain 4-7 errors

C: 6-5 points

Careless proofreading is evident

Text contains between 8-15 errors

D: 4-3 points

Little evidence of proofreading

Text contains between 16-30 errors

F: 2-0

No evidence of proofreading

Text has greater than 30 errors

**Possibilities (the best essays do this):**

Write an interesting essay; don’t focus on technical information that no one would want to read!

Include specific, interesting examples from your own personal experience.

Start each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence and keep that paragraph focused on just one main idea.

*Research option:* Choose specific, interesting examples that you read about.

*Research option:* Read first. Become a mini-expert on your topic before you begin drafting.

**Pitfalls (common mistakes students make with this assignment):**

Do not use clinical language. Be clear but be yourself.

Avoid the second-person point of view.

Do not switch back and forth between present and past tense.

Make sure the tone fits the subject.

Carefully proofread your essay before turning it in.

*Research option:* Your essay will include a lot of in-text citations; if it doesn’t, you’re doing it wrong! Remember that everything that is not common knowledge MUST include an in-text citation, even if it’s in your own words.