

Lesson 5: Extended Definition Essay

OBJECTIVES

For this exam, you will

- Use the writing process to write an essay using extended definition
- Write an effective thesis statement
- Develop paragraphs using topic sentences, adequate detail, supporting evidence, and transitions
- Develop critical reading skills
- Use responsible research methods to locate appropriate secondary sources
- Use Modern Language Association citation and documentation style to reference secondary source material correctly and appropriately
- Quote, paraphrase, and summarize secondary source material correctly and appropriately
- Use the conventions of standard written American English to produce correct, well-written essays

INTRODUCTION

As our culture evolves, the language we use to express ourselves changes too. To fully understand the world in which we live, it's important to fully comprehend the depth and breadth of the words that we use to describe it. Words that have more than definition or more than one meaning enrich not only our vocabulary, but also our lives.

Topic: Write a 1,500–1,700 word extended definition essay using either the word *friend* or the word *family* that analyzes the word's historical, social, and/or cultural evolution.

Purpose: To make a specific, unified, and original point about how the definition of *friend* or *family* has changed over a particular period of time due to one or more specific historical, social, and/or cultural factors.

Methods: To use at least four secondary sources to support your extended definition of the term you choose, including

1. An etymological dictionary
2. A standard or traditional dictionary
3. An article from Expanded Academic ASAP

Audience: Junior and senior-level distance education students enrolled at Penn Foster College

THE WRITING PROCESS

Prewriting

1. Before you decide on the specific word you'll write your essay about, take time to freewrite what you think the word means to you. This exercise should help you to decide which word you have more of your own ideas and opinions about and give you a good place to start. Explore where your definition comes from, and how it departs from the etymological definition.
2. Once you've chosen your word, either friend or family, review the model definition essays in your textbook, Goodwin's "Freegans" (434) and Crissey's "Dude" (438).
3. Return to your freewriting to add additional information
 - a. Research
 - i. Standard definitions of the word (431)
 - ii. Etymological dictionaries
 1. **www.Etymonline.com**
 2. **www.oed.com**
 - iii. Traditional dictionaries
 1. **www.merriam-webster.com**
 2. **www.dictionary.com**

iv. *Expanded Academic ASAP*

1. Expanded Academic ASAP is a subscription-only database available in Penn Foster’s digital library. You can access the database by clicking on the Library Services link in your Student Portal. See the “Academic Support and Online Resources” section in the introduction to this study guide.

b. Use negation to explain what your word doesn’t mean and to address misconceptions (433).

4. Review your freewriting to write a thesis statement that makes a claim about your word based on all of the content you’ve developed. The thesis statement should make a debatable point about how the word has evolved over time due to historical, social, and cultural changes.

5. Prepare a graphic organizer or outline (438) to organize your main points before you begin writing your essay. Consider using other patterns of development as you plan your body paragraphs to illustrate meaning, offer contrasts, and provide examples (432–433).

Drafting

6. Use your outline or graphic organizer to draft your essay.

a. Introduce the term, provide any necessary background information, and include your thesis statement in your introduction.

b. Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence that supports your thesis.

i. Remember that topic sentences are never questions or quotations.

c. Use transitions to end paragraphs and to guide readers to the next idea.

Revision

7. Use the chart on pages 447–448 in your textbook to help you revise your essay.
 - a. Consider your essay from the readers' perspective.
 - i. Do you have a thesis statement?
 - ii. Have you adequately identified the distinguishing characteristics of your term?
 - b. Employ the recommended revision strategies if you've answered no to any of the questions on the flowchart.

SUBMIT YOUR EXAM

Ensure your exam follows the proper format for submission:

- 1-inch margins on all sides
 - 12 pt. Times New Roman font
 - Double spacing
1. Use the header function in your word-processing program to enter your personal identification and exam information:

Student Name ID Number 50050400

Street Address

City, State, ZIP

Email Address

2. Save your exam with the file name:
IDNumber_ExamNumber_LastName_FirstName
3. Save your exam in either MS Word or Rich Text Format (.rtf). If an instructor can't open the file you submit, it will be returned ungraded.

4. When your exam has been evaluated and returned to you, you will be able to review the instructor's comments by clicking on the **View Project** button next to the grade and downloading the **Instructor Feedback File**. If you have trouble viewing the file, please contact an instructor.

To submit your essay exam, follow these steps:

1. Go to **<http://www.pennfoster.edu>**.
2. Log in to your student portal.
3. Click on **Take Exam** next to the lesson you're working on.
4. Follow the instructions provided to complete your exam.

Be sure to keep a backup copy of any files you submit to the school!

Tip: Review the evaluation rubric on the following page before submitting your essay.