

Definition Writing: Paragraph Assignment

- Select **one** of the concept-words under #2 on p 450 of Chapter 17 on Definition writing in your *Models for Writers* text. Choose one that you know something about or feel capable of writing about or one that interests you enough to do some research on
- Generate some draft material for your definition work: Brainstorm possible working definitions of your concept-word. You'll have to narrow your focus in order to define a very specific version of your concept-word, since others might define it differently than you will. Include in your brainstorming or list work some synonyms for your concept-word and perhaps a few negations or antonyms for it. (It's okay to use a dictionary source here to help you, but if you quote or paraphrase that dictionary material remember that you'll need to cite your source in your eventual paragraph.) Put your concept-word in a class of related concept-words similar to it, and then list and describe the specific characteristics or defining features of your concept-word. List examples and illustrations that you might offer to help further narrow and define your concept-word for an ignorant audience.
- Compose a draft paragraph (**6-10 sentences**) that introduces your word-concept to us by providing *your own specific working definition* of the term and offering 2 or 3 specific pieces of definition support from your brainstorm list to illustrate your specific definition
- As you write, stay in the **3rd person** (*he, she, it, they, the text, etc.*) by shifting the focus away from yourself and onto the actual subject(s) of your paragraph – Be sure to **not** use 1st (*I, me*) or 2nd person voice (*you, your*) anywhere in your paragraph
- Aim for **verb consistency**: Proofread your work carefully to make sure all of your verbs are in the *same tense* throughout the entire paragraph
- When you're done, please do the following before you submit your work to WebAccess:
 1. **Highlight** the term you're defining *and* the controlling idea or "working definition" of it that you'll provide as your thesis idea
 2. **Underline** each new attempt to define your concept word in a another way