

## DEFINITIONS

### 1. Match the words given below with these definitions:

1. A/an .....is somebody who has stopped growing except around the waist.
2. A/an .....is somebody you know well enough to borrow money from, but not well enough to lend money to.
3. A/an .....is a set of holes tied together with a string.
4. A/an .....is somebody whose career is in ruins.
5. A/an .....is something one generation buys, the next generation gets rid of, and the following generation buys again.
6. A piece of .....is something everybody gives but few take.
7. A/an .....is a mechanical device for waking up people who do not have children.
8. A/an .....is somebody who thinks twice before saying nothing.
9. ....is the only thing money cannot buy.

antique - diplomat - net - archaeologist - alarm clock - acquaintance - adult - poverty - advice

### 2. What is a good definition?

$$T = G + (d_a + d_b + d_c + \dots d_n)$$

where T equals the thing to be defined

= equals be

G equals a general class word

$d_a, d_b,$  etc. are the properties which distinguish T from the other members of the general class

Example:

A catalyst (T) is a substance (G) which alters the rate at which a chemical reaction occurs ( $d_a$ ), but is itself unchanged at the end of the reaction ( $d_b$ ).

i.e.,  $T = G + d_a + d_b$ .

### Exercise 1

The definitions below have been mixed up. Write them correctly:

<i>An X</i>	<i>is a/an</i>	<i>class word</i>	<i>wh-word</i>	<i>.....</i>
A machine		device	which	converts one form of energy into another.
A dynamo		device	which	attracts bodies towards the centre of the earth.
A triangle		machine	which	measures temperature.
Gravity		figure	which	generates electricity.
A thermometer		device	which	has three sides.
An engine		force	which	enables us to use forces more conveniently.

Notice how **a device** can be broken down into these general class words:

1. An apparatus is a number of devices which are put together for a particular purpose as in physics or chemistry experiments.
2. An instrument is a device which is used in doing something, often of a sensitive nature. Typical examples are a microscope and an ammeter.
3. A machine is a mechanical device which is used to provide power.
4. A tool is a simple device, often without any moving parts. Examples are a hammer and a spanner.
5. Instrumentation is a group or collection of instruments, usually ones that are part of the same machine.
6. Equipment comprises the tools, machines, or other things necessary for a particular job or activity.

## Exercise 2

Cross out the wrong general class words:

1. A screwdriver is a (an) tool/apparatus which tightens or loosens screws.
2. A drill is an instrument/apparatus which bores holes.
3. A condenser is a (an) equipment/tool which converts vapour into liquid.
4. An ammeter is a (an) machine/instrument which measures electrical current.
5. A fan is an instrument/apparatus which circulates air.
6. A generator is a (an) apparatus/machine which produces electricity.

## Exercise 3

Change the following descriptive statements into definitions. Use these class words: *a device, an instrument, a piece of furniture, a form of energy.*

1. A table has a flat horizontal surface supported by legs, and is used to sit at for meals, for working, etc.
2. A watch is used for measuring and indicating time.
3. A calculator can carry out number operations, but usually has no memory.
4. A telegraph receives or sends messages along wire by means of electric signals.
5. Electricity is used for heating and lighting and to provide power for machines in houses and factories.

## 3. Types of definitions

T - the word to be defined

G – general class word

DF – defining feature (distinguishing the T from the others of the same class; it states its use, function, size and shape, material, composition, structure, properties, etc.)

A/an T	is is defined as may be defined as	a/an G	DF
A/an T	is a name for is a name applied to	a/an G	DF
The name T term T	denotes refers to may be applied to	a/an G	DF
By a/an T	is meant is understood	a/an G	DF
A/an G	DF	is called may be called	a/an T

### Examples:

1. A loudspeaker is a device used for converting variations of electric energy into corresponding variations of acoustic energy, i.e. sound.
2. E-mail is a name applied to a software application which allows people to communicate via the Internet.
3. The term ultrasonics (or supersonics) refers to sound vibrations whose frequencies are beyond auditory limit.
4. By noise is understood sound consisting of a mixture of air-borne vibrations which is completely irregular with regard to sound intensity, frequency, and phase.
5. The force with which the earth attracts an object, i.e., the gravitational force exerted upon it, is called weight.

### Exercise 1 - reformulate the following definitions:

1. A switch is a general name for a device used for effecting the completion and interruption of an electric circuit.
2. "Dry ice" is a name sometimes applied to compressed carbon dioxide, i.e., solid carbon dioxide with a temperature of  $-79^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

3. The name “radar” denotes a method of scanning the surrounding space by means of high frequency radio waves, which are sent out from a powerful transmitter and are reflected by any object which they encounter. The name has been derived from the initial letters of the phrase “radio detecting and ranging”.
4. Fiction refers to books or stories about people and events invented by the author, rather than books about real events and things.
5. The science of determining the position and course of ships and aircraft is called navigation.

**Exercise 2 – form definitions of different kinds:**

1. Biology studies living things.
2. Physics is concerned with the study of matter and natural forces, such as light, heat, movement, etc.
3. A watch is used for measuring and indicating time.
4. A calculator can carry out number operations, but usually has no memory.
5. A telegraph receives or sends messages along wire by means of electric signals.
6. A telephone receives or sends sound, especially speech over long distances by electric means.
7. A computer can store and recall information and make calculations at very high speed.
8. Ecology is concerned with the study of the pattern of relationships of plants, animals, and people to their surroundings.
9. A bed consists of a flat rectangular surface about 2 metres long with a leg at each corner. It is used for sleeping.
10. The function of a thermometer is to measure temperature.
11. The function of an air-conditioning system is to keep the temperature and humidity of the air in rooms at values which provide a sense of comfort for human beings.
12. The function of a seismograph is to record the strength of earthquakes and the distance away from the epicentre.

**4. Notice what distinctive features can express:**

A T is a G (which is)	used for doing used to do	1.purpose and function
G (which is)	made from/of produced from obtained from prepared in the laboratory	2. material
G (which is) G -----	composed of consisting of containing --	3. composition and structure
G which is which has G -----	having	4. general appearance

**Practice**

Work in pairs. Think of three ordinary object you use or see every day. For each of them write two kinds of definition (starting with the name of the object / starting with a class word). Test them on another student by blanking out the “thing defined” word and see whether he or she knows what you have defined.

Example: *A writing instrument which consists of a long thin piece of wood with a piece of graphite in the middle is called ..... (a pencil)*

## Expanded definitions

A definition can also be expanded by giving an example of **the use** of the object or idea being defined. The relationship between the definition and its use can be made explicit by using a **marker**. In the following case the use is an effect of the definition.

*Aluminium is a metal which is light in weight. Consequently, it is used in the manufacture of aircraft.*

The general pattern is this:

DEFINITION	MARKER
...	<b>Therefore,</b> it is used ...
...	<b>Consequently,</b> one of its main uses is ...
...	<b>As a result,</b> ...

Use this pattern to expand the following definitions:

- 1) Stainless steel is an alloy which is resistant to corrosion.
- 2) Cotton is a soft natural fibre with a good level of absorbency and good insulating properties.
- 3) Glass is a substance which has the property of being transparent.
- 4) Sugar is a substance, often in the form of white or brown crystals, which has the property of being sweet.

## Reduced definitions

Compare:

- 1) A thermometer is an instrument **which is used for** measuring temperature.
  - 2) A thermometer is an instrument **used for** measuring temperature.
  - 3) A thermometer is an instrument **for** measuring temperature.
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- 1) A telescope is an optical instrument **which consists of** a combination of lenses and mirrors which make distant objects appear closer.
  - 2) A telescope is an optical instrument **consisting of** a combination of lenses and mirrors which make distant objects appear closer.

Use this pattern to reduce the following definition:

- 1) A watch is an instrument which is used for measuring and indicating time.
- 2) A person who studies living things is called a biologist.
- 3) A vegetable is a plant which is eaten either raw or cooked.
- 4) Electricity is a form of energy used for heating and lighting.

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## **MADE OF X MADE FROM / OUT OF**

Observe:

This table is made **of** wood.

*We are talking about **material***

Most of these buildings are made **of** brick

Petrol is made **from** oil.

*We are talking about a **process***

Paper is made **from /out of** wood

Fill in the correct preposition:

- 1) Most plastics are made \_\_\_\_\_ oil.
- 2) All of these decorations are made \_\_\_\_\_ paper.
- 3) This shirt is made \_\_\_\_\_ cotton.
- 4) Glass fibre is a cloth made \_\_\_\_\_ short thin threads of glass.
- 5) Glassware is objects made \_\_\_\_\_ glass, for example bowls, drinking containers, and ornaments.
- 6) Porridge is a thick, sticky food made \_\_\_\_\_ oats cooked in water or milk and eaten hot, especially for breakfast.
- 7) Most wind instruments are made \_\_\_\_\_ brass.
- 8) He made a chair \_\_\_\_\_ bits of wood.

## AS x LIKE

**As** is used

- 1 to talk about the job, function, status, age, role or use of a person or thing. It is followed by nouns, pronouns and ing-forms:  
Over the summer she worked as a waitress.  
He went to the party dressed as a clown.  
We all work together as a team.  
Do you see English teaching as being principally an education in values?
- 2 to talk about similarity. It is followed by a clause with a verb or by a prepositional expression:  
In Greece, as in Italy, they use a lot of olive oil in cooking.  
They were people who spoke and thought as he did.  
He admired her, as he had admired her mother.

**Like** is used to talk about similarity. It is followed by a noun, pronoun or ing-form:

- I'm very like my brother.  
He keeps the central heating full on. It's like living in the tropics.

1 Observe:

He worked <b>like</b> a slave.	= very hard indeed
He worked <b>as</b> a slave.	= he was a slave
He spoke <b>like</b> the President of the United States.	= in a similar manner
He spoke <b>as</b> the President of the United States.	= in his role of the president, i.e. he was the president

Fill in *as* or *like*, as appropriate:

- 1) We used an empty plastic shopping bag \_\_\_\_\_ as a wastepaper basket.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ a historian, I cannot agree with this interpretation.
- 3) I saw a dog \_\_\_\_\_ ours on the beach.
- 4) He's \_\_\_\_\_ a little baby.
- 5) The sudden change came \_\_\_\_\_ a shock to the community.
- 6) She was known to her neighbours \_\_\_\_\_ a kind old lady.
- 7) It was a small pocket flashlight shaped \_\_\_\_\_ a fountain pen.
- 8) I never expected to earn my living \_\_\_\_\_ an artist.
- 9) My watch said four o'clock but I looked \_\_\_\_\_ early evening.
- 10) This fruit tastes \_\_\_\_\_ a mango.
- 11) It was a story she had heard many times \_\_\_\_\_ a girl.

4 **AS**

1 Observe:

As there was nothing to do, we went home.	<b>as = because</b>
He counted them as they arrived.	<b>as = when, while</b>

Decide which meaning has *as* in the following sentences:

- 1) I saw him as he was getting off the bus.

- 2) He saw her, as they were both getting off the bus at the same time.
  - 3) She stayed at home as she was not feeling well.
  - 4) As I've never met the man, I can't tell you what he looks like.
  - 5) As he stood there he saw two men enter the shop.
  - 6) As this book is written in simple English, it is suitable for beginners.
  - 7) As he was posting the letter, he suddenly realized that he hadn't put a stamp on the envelope.
  - 8) As we were tired after the long walk, we went to bed early.
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### **Emphasizing the agent**

**I.** Stress the agent of an action by placing it at the end of your answer and making the necessary changes:

Example: *Who discovered America? (Christopher Columbus) → America was discovered by Christopher Columbus.*

- 1) Who showed the visitors round? (and English speaking guide)
- 2) Who checked every component before it was put in place? (a firm of independent engineers)
- 3) What runs the air-conditioning of the tunnel? (an independent electronic system)
- 4) What can prevent many diseases? (a well-balanced diet)
- 5) What causes the greenhouse effect? (gases released into the atmosphere)

II.

**IT IS / IT WAS for emphasis**

**Observe:**

Salmonella bacteria cause food poisoning.

- ▶ **It is** salmonella bacteria **that** cause food poisoning.
- ▶ **It is** food poisoning **that** salmonella bacteria cause.

In 1962 American doctors claimed that effective immunization against the common cold would be available within five years.

- ▶ **It was** in 1962 **that** American doctors claimed that effective immunization against the common cold would be available within five years.
- ▶ **It was** American doctors **who / that** claimed in 1962 that effective immunization against the common cold would be available within five years.
- ▶ **It was** effective immunization against the common cold **that** in 1962 American doctors claimed would be available within five years.
- ▶ **It was** within five years **that** in 1962 American doctors claimed that effective immunization against the common cold would be available.

Note: The verb cannot be emphasized in this way.

Always use "It is/it was" (singular).

*Emphasize parts of these sentences:*

- 1) The common cold is caused by more than 100 different viruses.
- 2) Manufacturers spend millions of dollars every year on advertisements.
- 3) Health matters matter to everyone.
- 4) Good health is an important factor in making people happy.
- 5) Louis Pasteur developed the treatment of milk and wine.