**Definition essay: What is a good parent?**

This essay is called a definition essay, which means you will give a detailed definition to what a good parent is. You will pick 3 or more criteria and create an essay around it. Your essay should be **2-3 pages long** (12 pt. TNR font).

* *THESIS*: A good parent is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*You must give context to your quotes. Quotes do not stand by themselves.*

* **INCORRECT:** “But remember, it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (90).
* **CORRECT:** When Atticus gives the children air-rifles for Christmas, he shares this advice with Jem, “it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (90).

*You must give a citation to your quote. A correct citation includes the page number in parentheses, followed by a period. The quotation mark closes the quote before the citation.*

* **INCORRECT:** “It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived.”
* **INCORRECT:** “It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived (100).”
* **CORRECT:** “It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived” (100).

**Remember …**

* No contractions (isn’t, don’t, won’t)
* Use present tense when writing about literature.
* Do not use “you” in the essay. Instead, say specifically who is being addressed.
  + **INCORRECT**: You should always listen to your parents.
  + **CORRECT:** Children should always listen to their parents.
* When using first-person voice, make sure you are using is correctly and effectively.
  + **INEFFECTIVE:** In my opinion, a good parent is honest. I think parents should always tell the truth.
    - (The “In my opinion” or “I think” is unnecessary. We know it is your opinion—you are writing the paper, after all.)
  + **EFFECTIVE:** When I asked my father why he was angry, he answered honestly. I appreciated that he treated me like an adult and not like a child.
    - (Using first-person voice gives insight to your experiences and sets a personal tone.)

**This essay is due: ­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**For 5 bonus points, I can turn my essay in to be revised by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Outlining your essay**

* Your essay must follow this format. You must write an outline before you begin writing your paper.
* It does not matter if you give your textual example or your personal example first.

I. **Introduction**

A. Attention getter

1. You may want to include common definitions here to provide a basis for your personal definition.

2. You may want to open with a contradictory image to what would be your image to illustrate that definition.

B. Thesis: State how you define the term. If you can write the definition using specific points, you will find the definition easier to follow when writing the paper.

II. **Body**

A. Point one

1. The first part of your definition of the term. (main idea)

2. Example to illustrate that point. (from the book)

3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

4. Example to illustrate that point. (from your experiences)

5. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

B. Point two

1. The second part of the definition of the term. (main idea)

2. Example to illustrate that point. (from the book)

3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

4. Example to illustrate that point. (from your experiences)

5. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

C. Point three

1. The third part of the definition (main idea)

2. Example to illustrate that point. (from the book)

3. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

4. Example to illustrate that point. (from your experiences)

5. Analysis of how the example illustrates the point.

D. Point four, etc.

III. **Conclusion**

A. Review your definition’s main points

B. Closing attention getter

1. Sometimes a reference back to the opening attention-getter is a good way of unifying the entire essay.

2. You may want to close with an explanation of how your definition has affected you.

*(adapted from http://www.northland.cc.mn.us/owl/Doing%20the%20definition%20essay.htm)*