

Paper #1

In class we discussed the three requirements for a good definition (the second requirement has two distinct aspects):

- 1) Describe and then briefly explain these requirements in your own words.
- 2) Then illustrate the importance of the requirements by constructing *inadequate* definitions that *fail* each of the requirements. Your definitions must be attempts to define "murder", "yellow", and/or "game". That is: Construct a definition of one of these concepts that fails to satisfy the first requirement. Then construct a definition of one of the concepts (it can be different from the first concept) that fails to satisfy one aspect of the second requirement. Then construct a definition of one of the concepts (it may be a definition of the same concept as one used before, or a different one yet) that fails to satisfy the other aspect of the second requirement. And so forth.
- 3) Finally, choose one of these concepts and try to give a good definition that satisfies all of the requirements. *Don't go easy on yourself here. Pretend you are Socrates trying to poke holes in the definition before you settle for it.* If you can't give a satisfactory one, at least get as close as you can, and then explain why you can't do any better. Even if you feel happy with your definition, you need to discuss it fully to show how it meets possible difficulties.

Your paper should be roughly 3 pages long, typed and double-spaced.

Your paper will be graded according to how well you understand the idea of a good definition, as well as how well you illustrate its importance through the sample definitions you construct. Proof-read your paper to prevent spelling and grammatical mistakes. If you need help with these kinds of problems see the VT Writing Center: http://www.composition.english.vt.edu/wc/WC_Home.html which has appointments and on-line help.

Your work must be your own—anything taken from a book or the internet must be properly credited. Turning in the paper with your name or student ID affixed to it constitutes pledging that you have obeyed the VT Honor Code.

The paper is due at the beginning of Discussion section on Friday, February 8th.