Lesson 4 - METHODS OF DEFINING

1. Defining by Synonym

    Feline – cat

    Talk

    Beautiful

    road

    Works only if you know what the synonym means.

    Example: loquacious, garrulous, voluble

    Words without synonyms: mango, princess, foot

2. Defining by Example

    Vehicle: car, train, boat, tricycle, plane,

    A good definition by example usually includes some differing terms

    Warning: Can be vague; for example, computer (which part is actually the computer)

3. Defining by Genus and Difference

    Define Backpack; A bag you carry on your back

    Name Genus and then add a description that sets it apart from the rest of the genus.

    Ex: Glasses are lenses that you wear on your face

     Ex: An author is a person who writes books.

    Genus: what kind of thing is it?
    Difference: What sets it apart from other things in this category?

    Read on p. 6

    Difference does not need to come after the genus. Such as a triangle is a three-sided polygon.

LESSON 5 – RULES FOR DEFINING BY GENUS AND DIFFERENCE

1. A Definition should state the essential attributes of the term

   EX: Car – ability to take you somewhere, not that it's pink

2. A definition should not be circular.

   EX: blindness – the state of being blind
   OKAY if it's part of the word such as   EX: Polar bear – A bear that lives up north

3. A definition should not be too broad or too narrow.

   EX: Cereal is food you eat with a spoon.
   EX: Sky-The sky is what's blue over our heads.

4. A definition should not be unclear or figurative.

   EX: A dog is man's best friend.
   EX: Year- A long period of time.
   EX: Ray- A light beam. OKAY: A beam of light

5. A definition should be stated positively when possible.

   EX: A dog is an animal that is not a cat.
   EX: The ocean is the part of the planet that is not land or on land.

   Some words are negative concepts so can't expect to define them in a positive way.
   EX: unhappy, poor, bald.

6. A definition should be the same part of speech as the term.

   EX: hungry- when you don't want to eat
   EX: afraid- people who are scared
   EX: To eat- what you do with food
   EX: brave- people who risk their lives

   DON'T USE WHERE OR WHEN IN A DEFINITION!!