

Examples are taken from P. Hurley, *A concise introduction to logic*.

**I. Determine whether the following definitions are stipulative, lexical, or precisising.**

1. "Blind" means, for federal income tax purposes, either the inability to see better than 20/200 in the better eye with glasses or having a field of vision of 20 degrees or less. (precising)
2. "Wristovision" means a miniature television set that can be worn on the wrist. (stipulative)
3. "Diffident" means lacking confidence in oneself; characterized by modest reserve. (lexical)
4. "Fiduciary" means having to do with a confidence or trust; a person who holds something in trust. (lexical)
5. "Intoxicated," for purposes of driving a car in many states, means having a blood-alcohol content of 0.1% (.001) or greater. (precising)
6. "Gweed" means a thoroughly immature person who feigns intellectual prowess; a total loser. (stipulative)
7. "Radioactive area" means, for purposes of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, any area accessible to individuals in which there exists radiation at such levels that a major portion of the body could receive in any one hour a dose in excess of 5 millirems or in any five consecutive days a dose in excess of 100 millirems. (precising)
8. "Scaling" means a sport in which people race four-wheel drive vehicles up the face of boulder-strewn hillsides. (stipulative)
9. "Diadem" means an ornamental headband worn as a badge of royalty; a crown. (lexical)
10. "Subgression" means moving oneself and one's family to a subterranean bomb shelter for the purpose of escaping nuclear attack. (stipulative)
11. "Intractable" means not easily governed; obstinate; unruly; not disposed to be taught. (lexical)
12. "Recession" means, for purposes of the National Bureau of Economic Research, two consecutive quarters of negative growth in real GNP or in aggregate output for the entire economy. (precising)
13. "Obelisk" means an upright, four-sided pillar that terminates in a pyramid; a dagger. (lexical)
14. "Aereomobile" means a vehicle that is normally driven on the ground but that has the capability of flying through the air to avoid traffic congestion. (stipulative)

**II. Determine whether the following are ostensive definitions, enumerative definitions, definitions by subclass, synonymous definitions, operational definitions, or definitions by genus and difference (i.e. what definitional technique is used).**

1. “Plant” means something such as a tree, a flower, a vine, or a cactus. (definition by subclass)
2. “Hammer” means a tool used for pounding. (definition by genus and difference; genus – “a tool”, difference – “used for pounding”)
3. “State” means something such as Ohio, Arkansas, Minnesota, and Tennessee. (enumerative definition)
4. “Neophyte” means beginner. (synonymous definition)
5. “Painting” means something like da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, van Gogh’s *Starry Night*, Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*, or Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*. (enumerative definition)
6. “Dessert” means something such as pie, cake, cookies, or ice cream sundaes. (definition by subclass)
7. “Hot” means, for an electric iron, that your wetted finger sizzles when placed momentarily in contact with it. (operational definition)
8. “Mountain” means something such as Everest, Rainier, Whitney, or McKinley. (enumerative definition)
9. “Hurricane” means a storm having winds of at least 73 miles per hour that originates at sea. (definition by genus and difference; genus – “a storm”, difference – “having winds of at least 73 miles per hour that originates at sea”)
10. A substance is “translucent” if and only if when held up to a strong light some of the light comes through. (operational definition)
11. “Insect” means something such as a fly, an ant, a wasp, or a caterpillar. (definition by subclass)
12. “Prime number” means a number greater than one that is divisible only by itself and one. (definition by genus and difference; genus – “a number greater than one”, difference – “that is divisible only by itself and one”)
13. “Language” means something such as French, German, Spanish, English, and so on. (enumerative definition)
14. “Tree” means this, and this, and this (as you point to a number of trees). (ostensive definition)
15. “Oak” means a tree that bears acorns. (definition by genus and difference; genus – “a tree”, difference – “that bears acorns”)

16. "Rapier" means sword. (synonymous definition)
17. An "electric current" flows in a circuit if and only if an ammeter connected in series with the circuit shows a reading. (operational definition)
18. "Philosopher" means someone such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, or Kant. (enumerative definition)
19. "Professional person" means a person such as a doctor, a lawyer, a professor, or an architect. (definition by subclass)
20. "Error" means mistake. (synonymous definition)
21. "Truck" means a vehicle used for hauling. (definition by genus and difference; genus – "a vehicle", difference – "used for hauling")
22. "Done" means, in reference to a baking cake, that a wooden toothpick poked into the center comes out clean. (operational definition)
23. "Musical composition" means something such as a symphony, a concerto, a sonata, or a toccata. (definition by subclass)

### **III. Criticize the following definitions in light of the ten criteria for lexical definitions.**

1. A sculpture is a three-dimensional image made of marble. (too narrow)
2. "Elusory" means elusive. (circular)
3. A cynic is a person who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. (Oscar Wilde) (metaphorical)
4. "iPod" means a handheld electronic device weighing about six ounces and featuring a single click-wheel on one side. (too broad; doesn't convey the essential meaning of the defined word)
5. A theist is anyone who is not an atheist or an agnostic. (negative; obscure)
6. "Intelligence" means whatever is measured by an IQ test. (doesn't convey the essential meaning of the defined word; too narrow)
7. A symphony is a musical piece written for full orchestra. (too broad)
8. Feminism is a militant movement originated by a group of deviant women for the purpose of undermining the natural distinction between the sexes. (affective terminology)
9. Logic is the study of arguments including definitions. (ambiguous)
10. A house is a structure made of wood or stone intended for human habitation. (too narrow)

11. Satire is a kind of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own. (Jonathan Swift) (metaphorical)
12. A carpenter's square is a square used by a carpenter. (circular)
13. "Normal" means an attribute possessed by people who are able to get on in the world. (vague)
14. An organic substance is any substance that is not inorganic. (negative)
15. Faith is the bird that sings when the dawn is still dark. (Rabindranath Tagore) (metaphorical)
16. "Schooner" means sort of like a sailboat. (vague, too broad)
17. "Gammon" means, in backgammon, a victory in which one player defeats another before he can remove any of his men from the board. (ambiguous)
18. A cello is a stringed musical instrument played with a bow. (too broad)
19. Tobacco is a plant grown in the southeastern United States that, when enjoyed in the form of cigars and cigarettes, produces a most delightful and satisfying taste and aroma. (affective terminology)
20. "Clock" means a manufactured device featuring two pointers that rotate past a set of numerals ranging from 1 to 12. (fails to convey the essential meaning; too narrow)
21. "Soap" means saponified glyceride. (obscure)
22. Mackerel: a sea-fish. (Johnson's Dictionary) (too broad)
23. "Anchorperson" means an electronic media guru who has great looks but less than average intelligence and who brings canned news to people incapable of reading a newspaper. (affective terminology)
24. "Pen" means an instrument used for writing on paper. (too broad (there are other instruments used for writing on paper), too narrow (one can write with pen on some other materials than paper))
25. Wine is an alcoholic beverage made from grapes. (too broad (brandy is also made from grapes) and too narrow (some wines are made from fruits other than grapes))