**Definition Paper – Helpful Tips for Generating Ideas**

**Synonym**

Think of other roughly equivalent words or phrases.

**Comparison**

Find an analogy between your concept and one more familiar to your reader.

**Contrast**

Figure out how your term differs from others (perhaps very subtle differences) and also different ways that your word is defined. For instance, “Globalization is different from internationalism, because globalization is about socio-economic relations that cross borders whereas internationalism is about the formal political relations between distinct nations.”

**Negation**

Specify what your word does not include. For instance, “Globalization is purely economic, not cultural.” (Many would disagree with this statement.)

**Classification (or genus and species)**

Figure out what categories apply here. For instance, apples and oranges are different, but both are fruit. Does your term belong to a broader category? Or is your term itself the broader category within which there are more specific terms.

**Analysis by parts**

Break down your term by its parts. For instance, if I were to define an automobile engine, I would talk about the pistons, the carburetor, the spark plug, the gas pump, etc. So, for a more abstract concept such as globalization, one could say that there many parts: financial, market, cultural, political, etc. How do all the parts work together or conflict? Is this the best way to break it down?

**Process**

Maybe your term does not indicate a thing, but a procedure or the way change happens. Explain how a task is performed. Or explain how the event occurs or how something changes.

**Example**

Illustrate your definition with a concrete example.

**History / Etymology**

Learn the history of the word or concept. Where does it come from? Has its meaning changed over time? For example, the word “secretary” developed from the word “secret” because a secretary was someone who was a confidential private assistant. But clearly, the word does not mean that to us today.

**Circumstances or Context**

Depending on the context, the same word can mean different things. So, explain what the context is for your word and why your definition is most appropriate for that context. Changing circumstances can change the meaning of a word.

**Metaphor**

Find an evocative resemblance between your word and something visual. For instance, Thomas Friedman’s metaphor for globalization is “flat world.”