

Definition

An important part of academic writing is carefully defining our terms. In particular, abstract terms such as *freedom* or 義理, need careful definition. For a simple term, a sentence length definition may be adequate; however, for more complex terms, or terms which play a central part in our thesis, we may need to write a paragraph or even a chapter in order to define our terms.

In intercultural studies, it is difficult to find a one-word translation of many culturally significant terms. In those cases, the writer must define carefully the meaning and significance of the word.

Assignment:

1. Choose 3 of the following Japanese words/concepts.
2. Try to select concepts you need to think about in order to define, not something you can do easily without thinking.
3. Feel free to choose a concept not listed below, but in which you are interested.
4. Think of an audience to whom you will explain the concept. Note who your audience is, in this case, probably people who know little about Japan.
5. Use a short paragraph for each term and explain it to your audience.

Method:

1. Identify the term to be defined.
2. Decide on your audience and use vocabulary they will understand.
3. Explain any unfamiliar terms.
4. Use examples.
5. Use comparison to show parallels between the term and what your audience already knows.

Material Culture

Think about:

1. How is it used?
2. What is it made of?
3. What does it look like?
4. What it is not or what it is not used for.
5. What is its significance in Japanese life?

ランドセル

うちわ

畳

お好み焼

おもち	玄関
ガスボンベ	浴衣
たんす	タイ焼
こたつ	床の間
神棚	下駄
みそ	扇
餡	たこやき
法被	腹巻
足袋	ふんどし
みりん	焼豆腐
粗大ごみ	湯沸かし器
温泉	予備校
堤灯	御幣
納豆	山葵

Abstract Cultural Concepts

With abstract concepts think about:

- What does it literally mean in English?
- How is the Japanese use of the word different from English?
- Give examples of how the concept is seen in daily life in Japan.

義理	縦社会
和	顔
建前 / 本音	遠慮
甘え	型