Classification Essay

What is a Classification Essay?

A classification essay puts one or more items into different groups or categories in order to make a point about those items. Usually, you must propose several possible groups/categories/classifications, choose which one to put your subject under, and then explain why you chose this group/category/classification over the others.

How do I begin?

- **Decide what you will classify.**
  - Be creative! Do NOT rely entirely on dictionary definitions.
- **Do not choose too many or too few possible classifications.**
  - Do not leave out obvious classifications.
  - Do not include every single possible classification.
- **Decide what point you will make.**
  - If the subject you are classifying belongs to one group/category instead of others, then this should teach the reader something about the subject.
  - What do you want the reader to learn from your classification of this subject?
- **Determine how classifying your subject will make that point.**
  - Why does your subject belong to one group/category/classification instead of others? What can or should the reader learn from this? How will this be useful to the reader?

An effective classification essay will have

- **An Introduction that**
  - Tells the reader what idea/concept/object you will be classifying
  - Tells the reader why this subject is difficult to classify
  - **States a thesis that tells the reader your classification of the subject and the larger point that your classification makes about the subject**
  - **States the specific support for your classification**
- **Body paragraphs that**
  - Begin with Topic Sentences that relate to your thesis and/or its specific support
  - Explain each specific support for your classification
  - Explain why you put the subject in this classification instead of others
  - Explain why your classification makes a larger point about the subject
- **A Conclusion that**
  - Restates the thesis
  - Summarizes the different classifications you considered
  - Summarizes why you put the subject in this particular classification and why this makes a larger point about the subject