**Student Sample of Definition Essay**

          “I honestly hate homework,” I said to my mom one day after spending three hours doing it.

          “I’m sorry, Kiah, but you have to do it,” she replied to my complaint.

            In that situation, I couldn’t help but to kick up my teenage attitude and whine, “But I don’t want to! I spend seven hours a day in school, and then I have to sit here and do four hours of homework? It’s absolutely ridiculous!”

            “Yes, I know,” she replied again.

             What I wasn’t really prepared to think about, though, was her next statement, “But that’s life.” What is life?

            We were standing idly in the hospital waiting room. My entire family from my dad’s side, my parents, my brother, and I were all there. We had been waiting for over an hour, and we were beginning to get really impatient because we hadn’t seen any nurses or doctors yet. My uncle was restless, rocking back and forth, side to side on his feet, every now and then mumbling something under his breath. Finally, before any of us had the chance to explode, my cousin’s nurse came out to greet us with the good news.

            “She’s ready for you,” she announced.

            As soon as she spoke, my uncle marched forward, following the women into Kirsten’s room. We were all giddy then. We couldn’t wait to go in and take a peek at the new beautiful baby girl that was seeing the world for the first time. So much life happened in those first few minutes: her first blinks, her first breaths, her first thoughts, her first sobs. The miracle of seeing her get her first take on the world and people around her was amazing. There are honestly very few words or descriptions that I could give to describe that moment. The baby girl wasn't even my own, and my heart swelled like the Grinch's. It was experiencing life for the first time.

            Life is so many things. Life is the birth of a baby. Life is the death of a loved one. It's the love you feel towards a family member. It's the affection you feel towards a spouse. It's the laughs you laugh at a funny joke your best friend told you. It's the sobs you cry when your dog dies. It's your dog dying from a cancerous tumor. It's the wind rustling through the trees in the fall. It's the sand squishing in your toes at the beach. It's the fish swimming in the lake when you go fishing. It's the blooming of a flower in the spring. It's the sun shining down, warming your face. It's the dreams and goals that you create throughout your life. It's the seaweed waving in the ocean while you're on spring break. It's the vampire fantasies that little girls dream of. It's every thought someone has ever had about anything. It's a break up of a long-time couple. It's the writing of a song about to hit number one on the charts. It's the swishing sound of flowing water. It's the screams at a football game. It's the kiss you give your boyfriend. It's a tornado tearing apart a small town. It's the cries for help from a burning building. It's the act of doing four hours of homework.

        If life is all of those things, then what isn't it? Life isn't just one specific thing. Life isn't one single concept that can be strictly defined and applied to every situation. Life isn't mellow or shy; it's complex and crazy. Life isn't just simply the first breath the baby took when she was born; it's the feeling of that breath going through her lungs, the taste of the air on her tongue.  Life isn't the idea of accomplishing something; it's the steps and obstacles that you go through in order to reach and conquer your goal. Life isn't just the smile that you put on your face; it's the story behind that smile, the reason why the muscles in your face created that shape; why you feel the joy that you do in that one moment. Life isn't just the blooming of a daisy in the spring; it's the complex process of photosynthesis that they use to grow and the amount of time that they wait to be able to bloom into something beautiful. Life isn't just the four hours of homework that you are given; it's the school lessons that you have learned by doing that homework, or the colleges you will be able to get into because of the tests that you aced because of doing those four hours of homework.

            Defining life is much more complicated than just looking it up in the dictionary.  Writer Diane Ackerman said in her book *One Hundred Names for Love: A Stroke, A Marriage, and the Language of Healing, "*Life is a thing that mutates without warning, not always in enviable ways. All part of the improbable adventure of being alive, of being a brainy biped with giant dreams on a crazy blue planet." Ackerman clearly illustrates what life is about to her. She knows that it’s an adventure, and to actually experience the adventure you need to have and fulfill giant dreams.  There are twists and turns for the better or worse, most obviously the cause of the adventure. Life isn't always going to be blissful.  There are most definitely going to be times where you just want to ask, "What the hell?” but literally everything in life has a rhyme and a reason; we just don't always have an idea to what they might be. Not everything is explainable.

           Once my mother said "But that's life" when I was complaining about my four hours of homework, I thought about everything that I used to define life. It's the reason why something happens, whether it's explainable or not. It's the factors of life, like blinking, breathing and thinking that make a person—newborn or elderly—who they are. Life is the natural processes of nature, like photosynthesis, growth, wind and sunshine.  It's crazy and sporadic; twisting and turning you in a million different directions--some good and some that might be questionable.  Life has no one single definition. The definition of life depends on the person that is giving it. Life itself depends on the person that is living it.