

*Guidelines for a Classification or Division Paper**

Classification is the process of sorting people, things, or ideas into groups or categories to make them more understandable. For example, your college classifies its course offerings by schools, divisions, and departments. *Division* is similar to classification; it groups or divides something into components. For instance, the humanities department at your college might be divided into English, modern language, and philosophy, and the modern language courses might be further divided into Spanish, French, and Russian. Classification groups *numerous* items into categories whereas division begins with *one* item and breaks it down into parts.

Some points to keep in mind about classification or division papers:

- The categories or parts you choose should not overlap. For example, an item or person should not fit into more than one category.
- The categories or parts should also be comprehensive. In a classification essay, the categories need to include all the items in a group. In a division essay, all the major parts of an item should be included.
- Each category or part should contain adequate details. Provide roughly the same amount and kind of detail and description for each of your categories or parts. For instance, if you give an example for one type of mental disorder, you should give an example for every other type discussed in the essay.
- The thesis statement identifies the topic and may reveal the principle used to classify or divide the topic. In most cases, it also suggests why your classification is useful or important. For example:

Most people consider videos a form of entertainment; however, videos can also serve educational, commercial, and political functions.

The Grand Canyon is divided into two distinct geographical areas, the North Rim and the South Rim; each offers different views, facilities, and climatic conditions.

- Use transitions. You need to keep your reader on track as you move from one category or part to another:

Transitions between categories or parts:

The *third* class of ...
The *final* category of ...
The *fourth* area of ...

Transitions within categories or parts:

Another feature that characterizes ...
The observation tower *also* contains ...
An *additional* characteristic of ...

**(Always check with your instructor for specific requirements regarding your assignment.)*