

St Mark's Word of the Week



Quintessential

Are you familiar with this word?

What does it mean?

Do you recognise the root words?



Let's see if we can work out what it means from looking at its etymology.

Quintessential



From the Latin quintus
meaning 'fifth'

From the Latin essentia
meaning 'being'

So what does quintessential mean?

'Fifth being'



The word quintessential arises from early attempts to understand what the universe was made of.

Ancient Greek philosophers believed everything was made of one of four elements...



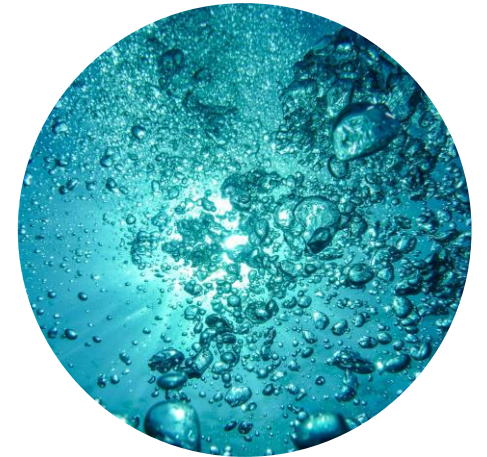
Earth



Air



Fire



Water



Heavenly objects, such as stars and planets, were then made up of a fifth element



**Quint essentia
(fifth being)**

Eventually, the word's meaning evolved into our modern definition of an ideal, or potentially heavenly, example of something.



Quintessential (adjective)

Definition

perfectly typical or representative of a particular kind of person or thing.

Examples:

- Fish and chips is a quintessential part of British cuisine.
- Baseball is the quintessential American sport.
- The Eiffel Tower, the quintessential Parisian landmark, was constructed for the World's Fair in 1889.

Can you come up with your own?



Quintessential (adjective)

Definition

perfectly typical or representative of a particular kind of person or thing.

Can you think of any synonyms?

- Typical
- Archetypal
- Classic
- Model
- Standard
- Stock

Can you think of any antonyms?

- Atypical
- Anomalous
- Uncharacteristic

