Plato's Definition of Knowledge

Why can we not define knowledge as "true belief"?

Consider the following scenario:

- Suppose your friend leaves the house and tell you that she is going out for a smoke.
- Suppose that you believe that she is outside smoking.
- Suppose that she actually is outside smoking.
- Thus you have a true belief that she is outside smoking.

Do you *know* that she is outside smoking?
What about defining knowledge as "warranted true belief"?

Consider again the above scenario:

- Suppose that you attempt to justify your claim that you know that your friend is outside smoking by saying that "in my experience she has always told the truth" and that "I saw her leave the house with a pack of cigarettes and a lighter in her hand."

It seems like this establishes that your true belief that she is outside smoking is warranted? Does it?

- What if you also smelled cigarette smoke after she left the house. Would your true belief then be warranted?

This leads to the question of how we define the term "warranted."

Is there a difficulty in attempting to answer this question?

What if I were to call a true belief warranted if the kind of evidence given to support the belief generally leads to true beliefs? How does this work as a definition of knowledge?
Tips for Writing an Argumentative Essay

- Remember to give arguments and not to state opinions without support
- Keep in mind the different claims being made in deductive arguments, which claim to prove the conclusion, and inductive arguments, which claim that the conclusion is very probable given the truth of the premises
- When critically examining arguments, consider whether the premises are acceptable, whether the premises are relevant to the conclusion, and, if so, whether they adequately support the conclusion. Keep in mind the fact that most of the arguments considered so far are deductive arguments
- Avoid the use of fallacies. See the fall session critical thinking notes for tutorials 7, 9 and 10 for common examples: http://publish.uwo.ca/~rmoir2/critical_1.htm
- I would suggest starting writing by writing a sketch of the introduction, then writing the body of the essay. After this write out your conclusion and then go back and finish your introduction. The last sentence of the introductory paragraph (your thesis statement) should state what you try to establish in the paper (your conclusion), which often is not fully clear until you have written the body of the essay
- For the body (and conclusion):
  - Get clear on how the argument works and what it establishes and present this clearly
  - Present an objection clearly and make sure that it actually addresses the initial argument
  - Look for flaws in the objection and present (an) argument(s) that the objection can or that it cannot be overcome
  - For your conclusion, make an overall assessment of the initial argument considering the objection and its (potential) flaws
• Clarity is key since it affects how it appears that you understand the material and how effective your arguments will come across, as well as the general impression of your essay
• Don’t be too ambitious – you are being graded on your understanding, your arguments, your organization, clarity and style and not on how profound your conclusion is – evidence of original thinking is an asset, but not a requirement