



# INSTRUCTIONAL WORDS

<b>Account for</b>	Give reasons for something.
<b>Analyse</b>	Take apart. Describe the different parts of the subject, how they inter-relate and contribute to the whole.
<b>Argue</b>	Give reasons or facts for and against an issue; try to prove by giving reasons or evidence for and against.
<b>Assess</b>	Briefly analyse, then make a careful judgement of the worth of something (e.g. a theory) in the light of its truth, usefulness etc. Give supporting evidence. You might include your opinion to a lesser extent.
<b>Compare</b>	Look for similarities, though differences may be mentioned, and come to a conclusion.
<b>Contrast</b>	Look for differences, though similarities may be mentioned, and come to a conclusion.
<b>Critique</b> (also: <u>Criticise</u> <u>Critically analyse</u> )	Express your judgement about a subject. Analyse the subject and describe to what extent it is supported by evidence. In a lengthy assignment you might also analyse alternative ideas and describe the extent to which evidence supports them, and make a comparison.
<b>Define</b>	Give concise, clear meanings. Show that the distinctions implied in the definition are necessary to distinguish this particular item from all others in that class.
<b>Describe</b>	Give a detailed account of something.
<b>Discuss</b>	Investigate or examine a subject. Present a point of view after considering <u>both</u> sides of an issue or question. Your point of view should be supported by evidence.
<b>Enumerate</b>	List the points required one by one, concisely.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Present a careful judgement of the problem, stressing both advantages and limitations. Evaluation implies evidence-based argument and, sometimes, personal judgement.
<b>Explain</b>	Clarify and interpret the material you present. State the 'how' and 'why', the results, and, where possible, causes.
<b>Explore</b>	Examine by working through systematically.



**Related resources:**  
Analysing the question

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<b>Illustrate</b>	Explain or clarify your answer by using specific examples or concepts. Sometimes you may do this by using a visual representation such as a figure, picture, diagram, graph, or drawing.
<b>Interpret</b>	Express the meaning of, translate, exemplify (give examples of), solve, or comment upon the subject. Usually you will give your judgement of or reaction to the problem, but always make use of evidence.
<b>Justify</b>	Give evidence which supports an argument or idea. Show why decisions or arguments were made and consider objections that others may make.
<b>Outline</b>	Give the main features or general principles of a subject. Emphasise structure and arrangement. Do not include minor details.
<b>Prove</b>	Show whether something is true or false. Establish something with certainty by evaluating and giving experimental evidence or by logical reasoning.
<b>Relate</b>	Emphasise connections and associations in descriptive form, or by a narrative which shows how things are connected to each other.
<b>Review</b>	Analyse the major points of the subject in organised sequence and briefly comment on them.
<b>State</b>	Present in brief, clear form.
<b>Summarise</b>	Give the main facts in shortened form. Do not include details and examples.
<b>Trace</b>	Follow the development or history of a topic step by step from some point of origin.

## How, what, and why?

*How, what, and why* are often used in academic assignment questions. It is not possible to list all the ways in which they can be used but below are some of the most common meanings.

<b>How</b>	Describe a process. You usually need to identify the main points. Support your description of the process and main points with evidence. You often use examples as part of your evidence.
<b>What</b>	State and describe the main features of a topic, or event. Support your statements about the main features with evidence related to the subject.
<b>Why</b>	Give the reasons for an event, process, or fact. Support these reasons with evidence.

