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**Essay Question Verbs (Accessible)**

Some question verbs can be used interchangeably, while others require you to do a specific action. Understanding the verb in the question helps you to answer in an appropriate way.

**Account for:** provide an explanation for why something happened.

**Apply:** use prior knowledge to discuss, relate to or explain the topic.

**Argue:** propose reasons why a certain view or idea should be either supported or opposed. Use evidence and logical reasoning to attempt to convince the reader to accept your view.

**Analyse:** deconstruct the essay topic into its core components. Each component must be investigated, using evidence and critique to form your argument. Explain the relationship between the components.

**Assess:** investigate and give a judgement on the value of a topic or claim. An assessment takes a broad look at the argument or topic and give views both for and against the authors stance. However, your stance on the subject should be clear in the writing.

**Clarify:** describe the components of an argument, idea, or process in simpler terms. You may also need to explain any misunderstandings surrounding your topic of discussion.

**Compare:** demonstrate and describe the similarities between the topics. Comparisons should not just be descriptive, they should identify why the similarities are relevant.

**Comment:** give an opinion on the subject, supported by evidence.

**Contrast:** highlight the differences between topics. Explain why these differences are important.

**Critique:** look the topic and any theories or opinions surrounding it. Use this evidence to offer a judgement on the subject.

**Define:** outline the meaning of something in a precise manner. If the exact definition of the subject is disputed, draw attention to this.

**Demonstrate:** using examples and evidence, show something about the subject.

**Describe:** give an account of the aspects, qualities or features of a given subject, concept or event.

**Discuss:** describe both the advantages and disadvantages of a statement or argument. Use evidence to back up your points. Based on this evidence, arrive at some sort of conclusion about the subject or argument.

**Distinguish/Differentiate:** highlight the differences between the topics.

**Evaluate/Critically evaluate:** appraise the value of an argument or subject by measuring its strengths and weaknesses, using evidence to support both sides. Provide a final judgement and ensure that it is clear how you arrived at this judgement.

**Examine:** identify the factors or issues associated with the topic and highlight their relevance or importance to the subject.

**Explain:** describe something with clarity, providing definitions and reasons where required. Your answer should provide the reader with a clear understanding of the concept.

**Explore:** use various viewpoints to question and investigate a topic.

**Give an account of:** focus on providing a description of the events or topics, rather than an explanation of them.

**Identify:** highlight or draw attention to the key factors of the subject.

**Illustrate:** use evidence and examples to show reasons for why something is so.

**Justify:** support a stance, statement or argument by drawing on evidence in a logical manner. Address any objections to the viewpoint.

**Outline:** provide a brief description of the main components or features of the topic.

**Relate:** demonstrate the connection between the subjects.

**Review:** summarise and critique the core features of the subject.

**State:** clearly and concisely provide details on the topic.

**Summarise:** draw together and highlight the essential points of a topic, leaving out unnecessary detail or information.

**To what extent/How far:** determine the truthfulness, value or contribution of the topic to the overall argument. Use evidence to support your answer.

**Trace:** describe the events or history of a topic with respect to a particular order.

The following websites were consulted when creating this resource:

* https://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/ask/documents/step\_1\_Instruction\_verbs.pdf
* https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/all-resources/writing/writing-resources/essay-terms
* http://manoa.hawaii.edu/undergrad/learning/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Important-words-in-essay-questions.pdf
* http://lsc.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Words-to-Watch-for-in-Essay.pdf
* https://www.lexico.com/grammar/how-to-understand-the-essay-question
* https://www.itseducation.asia/dictionary/essay.htm#