

INSTRUCTIONAL VERBS AND MEANINGS: INTERPRETING THE QUESTION IN LANGUAGES

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Account for	Provide reasons for ...
Analyze	Examine in close detail; identify the issue into its constituent parts/key features. Look in depth at each part using supporting arguments and evidence for and against as well as how these interrelate to each other.
Assess	Decide how important/useful/ valuable/ true/ just/ effective something is; make an informed judgement. Identify merits and limitations. Justify your decision.
Comment	Present an informed opinion on ...
Comment critically	Present an informed opinion; express your judgement/ correctness/ merit of your opinion. Discuss the limitations and good points or contributions of the point in question.
Compare	Examine qualities, or characteristics, to discover resemblances/ similarities. 'Compare' is usually stated as 'compare with': you are to emphasize similarities. Although you may not be specifically asked to 'compare and contrast', you may discuss differences. If appropriate, justify your choice.
Consider	Think about, review and respond to the given information.
Contrast	Stress dissimilarities, differences, or unlikeness of things, qualities, events, or problems.
Critically discuss	Express your judgement based on careful consideration of the evidence for and against something. Discuss the limitations and merits of something. Always provide supporting evidence from the text.
Deduce	Draw conclusion from ...
Define	Definitions call for concise, clear, authoritative meanings. Outline the precise meaning of a word or phrase in context. Details are not required but limitations of the definition should be briefly cited.

Describe	In a descriptive answer you should recount, characterize, sketch or relate in narrative form. Identify differences and provide substantiating evidence if appropriate.
Differentiate between	
Discuss	The term discuss, directs you to examine, analyze carefully, and present considerations in favour and against a particular issue/point. This type of question calls for a complete and entailed answer. This is to say, that your response requires you to investigate by argument. You should sift through the arguments and the evidence to support them, giving reasons for and against both sides and examine the implications. This could mean that you might need to provide evidence even for the 'side' you do not support, using evidence from the text.
Distinguish	This means to show the difference between things. You must identify differences and provide substantiating evidence if appropriate.
Elaborate	Provide a full/complete response. Provide evidence if appropriate.
Enumerate	The word enumerate specifies a list or outline form of response. In such questions you should recount, one by one, in concise form, the points required/ the sequence of events and so on.
Evaluate	In an evaluation question you are expected to present a careful appraisal/judgement of the problem stressing both merits and limitations. Evaluation implies authoritative appraisal of both merits and limitations. Provide supporting evidence from the text.
Examine	Consider in detail; investigate.
Explain	In explanatory answers it is imperative that you clarify and interpret the material you present. In such an answer it is best to state the 'how' or 'why', reconcile any differences in opinion, and, where possible, state causes. The aim is to make plain the circumstances which give rise to whatever you are examining.
Illustrate	A question which asks you to illustrate usually requires you to explain or clarify your answer to the problem by presenting an example. (In the languages, this does not mean that you should draw something.)

Interpret	Reveal what you believe to be the meaning or significance of something; to make sense of something that might otherwise be unclear, or about which there may be more than one opinion. So usually, this involves giving your own judgement. You are expected to translate, exemplify, solve, or comment upon the subject and usually to give your judgement or reaction to the situation/issue.
Justify	When you are instructed to justify your answer you must prove or show adequate grounds for a decision or conclusion by supporting it with sufficient evidence and argument. In such a response, evidence must be presented in convincing form.
List	Listing is similar to enumeration. You are expected in such questions to present an itemized series or tabulation. Such answers should always be given in concise form.
Outline	An outline answer is organized description. You should give main points and essential supplementary materials, omitting minor details, and present the information in a systematic arrangement or classification.
Place in context	State what had just taken place to result in what is happening in the given extract and briefly state what is happening in the given extract.
Prove	A question which requires proof is one which demands confirmation or verification. In such discussions you should establish something with certainty by evaluating and citing evidence or by logical reasoning.
Relate	This usually means: (i) narrating a sequence of events – outline the story of a particular incident or (ii) showing how certain things are connected or affect each other, or to what extent they are alike. In a question which asks you to show the relationship or to relate, your answer should emphasize connections and associations in descriptive form.
Review	A review specifies a critical examination. Examine closely an issue/idea/point/subject that has been put forward for a certain proposal or argument. Usually, although not always, this means concluding with your own judgement as to the strength of the case.

State	In questions which direct you to specify, give, state, or present, you are called upon to outline briefly and clearly the facts of the situation or a side of an argument. This doesn't call for argument or discussion, just the presentation of the facts or the arguments. Equally it doesn't call for a judgment from you, just reportage.
Summarize	When you are asked to summarise or present a summarisation, you should give in condensed form/concise account of the main points or facts. All details, illustrations, elaboration and argument are to be omitted.
Trace	When a question asks you to trace a course of events, you are to give a description of progress, historical sequence, or development from the point of origin.

REFERENCES

https://library.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/file/646/understanding_instructional_verbs
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/student-support/for-students/revision/understanding-the-question>
http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/assessment_evaluation/assessment/glossary.html