

Words you will often find used in your assignment

Task Words	Meaning
Analyse	Examine in very close detail; identify main points and show why they are important
Assess	Weigh up all views on the essay topic (not just yours) and make an informed judgement about its value, strengths, or weaknesses
Clarify	Describe aspects of an issue or topic, making the meaning clear and identifying any misunderstandings
Comment on	Identify and write about the main issues. State your views based on what you have read, researched, or learnt in lectures and tutorials. Avoid purely personal opinion
Compare/contrast	Describe the similarities and differences of the viewpoints or topics you have been asked to compare or contrast
Criticise/critically analyse/critically evaluate	Weigh arguments for and against something. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence on both sides of the subject under scrutiny, making use of other sources
Define	Give the exact meaning of a word or term
Demonstrate	Show clearly a logical description or argument, using examples and evidence from the literature
Describe	Give a detailed written account of the main characteristics or features in a logical sequence. Emphasize the important points without interpreting them
Discuss	Investigate and examine an argument by giving evidence for and against it – this requires both description and interpretation
Evaluate	Weigh up the value of an argument considering its usefulness or truth - include the opinion of scholars in the field as well as your own
Examine	Establish facts on important issues to do with the topic by looking at them in close detail

<i>Explain</i>	Tell how things work or how they came to be the way they are, offering reasons why and describing cause and effect
<i>Explore</i>	Give an overview of all viewpoints and any of your own arguments
<i>Identify</i>	Point out and describe the key features, indicating their significance or implications
<i>Illustrate</i>	Make something clear. You might use an example, Biblical text or quotation from another source to strengthen your statement
<i>Interpret</i>	Explore and clarify an idea using examples and personal comments
<i>Outline</i>	Briefly describe the main points, features or general principles of your topic, but leave out minor details
<i>Relate</i>	Show the similarities and connections between different texts or arguments
<i>Review</i>	Survey a topic and examine the literature critically; provide a factual account of the literature and carefully evaluate its worth
<i>Summarise</i>	Clearly outline the main points of a matter, leaving out details and examples
<i>Trace</i>	Follow the development of a topic, concept, or debate starting at its origin

Other useful definitions	Meaning
<i>Issue</i>	An important topic for discussion; something worth thinking about and raising questions about
<i>Objective</i>	The point being aimed for, what you want to achieve by a particular activity
<i>To what extent?</i>	This phrase asks you to assess the topic and the evidence you used in presenting a position and how much you agree with the statement or idea in question