

GLOSSARY OF KEY ESSAY / EXAM TERMS

| <i>What they say</i> | <i>What they might mean</i> |
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| Account for | Requires an explanation of the set topic; not just a description, i.e. an answer to the question "why". |
| Analyse | Requires a clear exposition of the topic, breaking complex issues /ideas into component parts and explaining their relationship(s). |
| Argue | Make a case based on appropriate evidence for / against some point of view. |
| Assess | Estimate the size, quality and value. |
| Consider | Form a carefully reasoned account giving attention to all aspects. |
| Compare/Contrast | Expects you to consider differences and similarities characteristics of the phenomena in question. (This involves more than just listing "likes" and dislikes; it involves a consideration of the implications of these). |
| Criticise | Denotes that you should use appropriate evidence to support your judgement on the value / merit of an argument. |
| Define | Set down the precise meaning of a word, phrase or concept. Take into consideration different and sometimes opposing definitions. |
| Describe | Give a detailed or graphic account. |
| Discuss | Asks you to present and consider several positions in a debate; look at the "for" and "against" of the arguments(s) you have chosen to focus on. |
| Evaluate/Assess | Asks you to consider the strengths and weakness of a particular approach / contention. (Whilst a brief description of the approach(es) is necessary, you should focus on judging the (de) merits of particular positions and providing a balanced appraisal. |
| Examine | Implies you should investigate the essential elements of an issue / topic and the relationship between them. |
| Explain | Requires you to briefly describe and then interpret and account/ give reasons for a particular phenomenon / framework. |
| Explore | invites you to consider approaches / possibilities and exercise your imagination. |
| How far/to what | Suggests you should present and evaluate the evidence for extent and against a particular statement / approach. |
| Identify | Pick out the key features. |
| Illustrate | Expect you to provide examples to explain / support a statement. |

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| Interpret | Expound the meaning of; make clear and explicit, usually giving your own judgment also. |
| Justify | Asks you to supply the reasons / grounds for or against a particular position contention. |
| List | List relevant items, possibly in note form. |
| Outline | Give the main features of, or general principles of a subject, omitting minor details and emphasising structure and arrangement. |
| Prove | Demonstrate the truth of something by offering evidence. |
| Relate | Show how one thing is connected to another. |
| Review | Make a survey of, examining the subject carefully. Analyse the survey and come to a judgement. |
| State | Express the main points of an idea or topic. |
| Summarise | Give a brief account of the main points. |
| Trace | Follow the development or history of a topic from some point of origin. |