

Directive words

account for	Explain why and give reasons based on evidence.
analyse	Break it down into parts and examine in detail to see how it fits together.
argue	Discuss and reason. Present the case for and against a particular idea.
comment	Say why something matters. Give an opinion based on evidence examined.
compare	Find similarities, and therefore some differences, between ideas.
contrast	Show the differences between ideas and assess how different they are.
critically evaluate	Assess the strength of the evidence for or against particular theories, opinions or models. Evaluate each one and come to a clear overall view.
criticise	Give your judgement about the merits and defects of theories or opinions and back judgement by a discussion of the evidence.
debate	Present the evidence for and against a particular point.
describe	Give a detailed account; say what it is.
discuss	Examine in detail and give explanatory reasons (for and against if appropriate). Come to your own conclusion based on the evidence.
estimate	Weigh up the evidence and say by how much a theory or opinion may be preferable.
evaluate	Appraise the value of something and come to an opinion based on evidence.
examine	Investigate in detail and discuss.
explain	Give reasons; make complex ideas clear so they can be understood. Say why something is important giving detail in support.
explore	Investigate a concept, idea or issue and show why there might be debate.
how important	Estimate the worth of an opinion, theory or concept and put it in context (e.g. time, place, movement).
illustrate	Explain and give clear examples as evidence in support of points made.
interpret	Explain the underlying meaning and give your own judgement.
in what ways	Give a number of descriptions and explanations.
justify	Give reasons for decisions or conclusions and support these with evidence.
outline	Give an overview covering the key points and relationships between them.
relate	Show how things are connected to each other and the extent to which they affect each other.
review	Examine the subject critically and come to a view.
show how	Give the main characteristics or features, or outline a sequence, and use illustrative examples or other evidence in support.
state	Present the main features or key ideas clearly.
summarise	Give a brief account or overview of the whole without going into detail.
to what extent	Consider how far something is valid or accurate and the ways in which it is not proven and/or supported by evidence.

British Sign Language (BSL) translation: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_pzg64xvt