



KEY WORDS IN ESSAY QUESTIONS

Verbs asking for everything:

<i>Comment</i>	Explain, illustrate, or criticize the meaning or significance of a subject.
<i>Describe</i>	Give either a detailed or a graphic account of a subject.
<i>Discuss</i>	Investigate a subject by argument, going into its pros and cons.
<i>Narrate</i>	Tell a story; that is, a series of events in the order in which they occurred. You may be also asked to interpret or explain something about the events you are narrating.
<i>Review</i>	Survey and examine a subject critically--either a summary, an analysis or criticism.
<i>State</i>	Describe a subject in precise terms or reproduce a definition exactly.

Verbs asking for main points:

<i>Analyze</i>	Break the subject up into the main ideas and discuss the main points.
<i>Enumerate</i>	Present a list of the main ideas composing the whole of the subject.
<i>List</i>	As in "enumerate," write an itemized series of concise statements.
<i>Outline</i>	Summarize in a series of headings and sub-headings (theme, main ideas, supporting and subordinate ideas), often a two-stage outline omitting detail.
<i>Relate</i>	Show how things are related to or connected with each other or how one causes another, correlates with another or is like another.
<i>Tabulate</i>	Organize the main ideas into a scheme of headings such as a table of contents, but sometimes form into a table.
<i>Trace</i>	Follow the development or history of your subject from the point of its origin.
<i>Summarize</i>	Make a brief, concise account of the main ideas of a theme, concept, principle, development or procedure, omitting details and examples.

Verbs asking for certain specific characteristics or certain limited facts:

<i>Compare</i>	Show the similarities and differences of two or more subjects.
<i>Contrast</i>	Show the difference between two or more subjects.
<i>Define</i>	Give the meaning of a word by fitting it into a general category and then distinguishing it from closely related subjects, sometimes developed by examples and illustrations.
<i>Diagram</i>	Describe with graphs, sketches, etc.
<i>Explain</i>	Account for by clearly stating and interpreting the details around a thing or make clear its character, causes, results, implications, etc.
<i>Identify</i>	Briefly state dates, people, places or events which set this fact or figure apart or makes it outstanding. Show that you know what it is.
<i>Illustrate</i>	Clarify by giving examples, comparisons, analogies, or by giving figures or diagrams.
<i>Label</i>	Point-out and name specific parts of a figure or illustration.
<i>Prove</i>	Establish that something is true by giving clear logical reasons and factual evidence.

Verbs asking for your supported opinion:

<i>Choose/Select</i>	Make a choice between one of several interpretations, explanations, etc.
<i>Criticize/Critique</i>	Analyze and judge something, either positively or negatively, as the case warrants. Support your conclusions with facts.
<i>Evaluate</i>	Carefully appraise the problem, citing both advantages and limitations. Emphasize the appraisal of authorities and your personal evaluation.
<i>Interpret</i>	Expound the meaning of something, make it clear and explicit and evaluate it in terms of your own knowledge and belief.
<i>Justify</i>	Prove or give reasons for decisions or conclusions; try to be convincing