

## INSTRUCTION WORDS

This table explains the meaning of some of the most common instruction words found in assignment tasks.

Instruction word	Meaning
<b>Account for</b>	Give reasons for; explain (note: give an account of; describe).
<b>Analyse</b>	Break the information into constituent parts; examine the relationship between the parts; question the information.
<b>Argue</b>	Put the case for or against a view or idea giving evidence for your claims/reasons for or against; attempt to influence the reader to accept your view.
<b>Balance</b>	Look at two or more viewpoints or pieces of information; give each equal attention; look at good and bad points; take into account many aspects and give an appropriate weighting to those aspects.
<b>Be critical</b>	Identify what is good and bad about the information and why; probe, question, identify inaccuracies or shortcomings in the information; estimate the value of the material.
<b>Clarify</b>	Identify the components of an issue/topic/problem/; make the meaning plain; remove misunderstandings.
<b>Compare</b>	Look for similarities and differences between; perhaps conclude which is preferable; implies evaluation.
<b>Contrast</b>	Bring out the differences.
<b>Criticise</b>	Give your judgement on theories or opinions or facts and back this by discussing evidence or reasoning involved.
<b>Define</b>	Give the precise meaning. Examine the different possible or often used definitions.

<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show clearly by giving proof or evidence.
<b>Describe</b>	Give a detailed, full account of the topic.
<b>Determine</b>	Find out something; calculate.
<b>Discuss</b>	Investigate or examine by argument; debate; give reason for and against; examine the implications of the topic.
<b>Estimate</b>	Calculate; judge; predict.
<b>Evaluate/weigh up</b>	Appraise the worth of something in the light of its truth or usefulness; assess and explain.
<b>Examine</b>	Look at carefully; consider.
<b>Explain</b>	Make plain and clear; give reasons for.
<b>Give evidence</b>	Provide evidence from your own work or that of others which could be checked by a third party to prove/ justify what you say.
<b>Identify</b>	Point out and describe.
<b>Identify trends</b>	Identify patterns/changes/ movements in certain directions (e.g. over time or across topics/ subjects).
<b>Illustrate</b>	Explain, clarify, make clear by the use of concrete examples.
<b>Interpret</b>	Expound the meaning; make clear and explicit, giving your own judgement.
<b>Justify</b>	Show adequate grounds for decisions, a particular view or conclusions and answer main objections likely to be made to them.
<b>Outline</b>	Give a short description of the main points; give the main features or general principles; emphasise the structure, leaving out minor details.
<b>Prove</b>	Show that something is true or certain; provide strong evidence

	(and examples) for.
<b>Review</b>	Make a survey examining the subject carefully; similar to <i>summarise and evaluate</i> .
<b>State</b>	Present in a brief, clear form.
<b>Summarise</b>	Give a concise account of the chief points of a matter, removing unnecessary detail.
<b>Synthesise</b>	Bring elements together to make a complex whole, draw together or integrate issues (e.g. theories or models can be created by synthesising a number of elements).
<b>Trace</b>	Follow the development of topic from its origin.