

HOW TO:

USE KEY WORDS FOR ESSAY QUESTIONS

ANALYZE:

Break into two separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part.

COMPARE:

Examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences. Comparison generally asks for more than differences.

CONTRAST:

Show differences. Set in opposition. Make judgments; evaluate comparative worth. Criticism often involves analysis.

DEFINE:

Give the meaning, usually a meaning specific to the course or subject. Determine the precise limits of the term to be defined. Explain the exact meaning. Definitions are usually short.

DISCUSS:

Consider and debate, or argue the pros and cons of an issue. Write about any conflict. Compare and contrast.

ENUMERATE:

List several ideas, aspects, events, things, qualities, reasons, etc.

EXPLAIN:

Make an idea clear. Show (logically) how a concept is developed. Give the reasons for the event.

EVALUATE:

Assess the effectiveness, quality, or usefulness; determine value.

OUTLINE:

Describe main ideas, characteristics, or events.

PROVE:

Support with facts (especially facts presented in class or in the text).

RELATE:

Show the connections between ideas or events. Provide a larger context.

ILLUSTRATE:

Give concrete examples. Explain clearly by using comparisons or examples.

INTERPRET:

Explain the meaning, unravel and decode parts of the text or topic; offer different perspectives in order to explain.

STATE:

Explain precisely.

SUMMARIZE:

Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions. Avoid unnecessary details.

TRACE:

Show the order of events or progress of a subject or event.

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