



Direction Words Used in Essay Questions

Compare

Explain similarities and differences.

Contrast

Explain differences only.

Criticize or evaluate

Make a judgment about strengths and weaknesses, positive or negative aspects.

Define

Give a precise and accurate meaning.

Describe

Provide a detailed account.

Discuss or explain

Give reasons, facts, details that show you understand.

Enumerate or list

State points one by one and briefly explain.

Illustrate

Explain by using examples.

Interpret

Explain in your own words and discuss significance.

Justify or prove

Construct an argument for or against and support with evidence.

Outline

Describe in general and cover main points.

Relate

Show a connection among ideas.

Summarize

Briefly organize and bring together main ideas.

Trace

Describe a series of steps, stages, or events.