



ACTION VERBS TO CONSIDER

When approaching any task, it is important to take note of possible action verbs in that task. These can be a helpful indicator of what is being asked and how much detail to include to guide you towards successful completion. The action verbs below are some of the most common.

Please note that the following list is not exhaustive.

DISCUSS

You are being asked to offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses: opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

IDENTIFY

You are being asked to recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.

EXPLAIN

You are being asked to provide a detailed account including reasons or causes
Use linking words such as 'because' or 'therefore' to help you to provide explanations.

SELECT

You are being asked to choose a word, part of the text or an idea and sometimes justify or explain your preference to another or others.

DESCRIBE

You are being asked to develop a detailed picture or image of, for example, a structure or a process; using words or diagrams where appropriate; produce a plan, simulation or model.

REFERENCE

You are being asked to provide the use of a source of information or a supporting example in order to illustrate your point.

EXAMINE

You are being asked to consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and relationships of the issue.

CREATE

You are being asked to think of, generate, come up with, design or produce a new concept based on stimulus material or entirely from your imagination.

REVIEW

You are being asked to re-examine deliberately or critically, usually with a view to approval or dissent; to analyse results for the purpose of giving an opinion.

COMPARE

You are being asked to give an account of the similarities and/or differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both/all of them throughout.

SUMMARISE

You are being asked to demonstrate your understanding of the text by condensing the main points in your own words.

ANALYSE

You are being asked to study or examine something in detail, break down something in order to bring out the essential elements or structure; identify parts and relationships, and interpret information to reach conclusions.