

Assignment Instruction Words

Assignment instruction words indicate how you are to address an assignment topic. Seek further clarification from your class tutor if you are unsure what is expected in your assignment.

Instruction Word	Meaning
Account for	Give reasons, explain why it happened.
Analyse	Break up the subject into its main ideas, and examine the relationships between them. Focus on “how” and “why.” Do not simply describe or summarise. Relate the topic to theory, frameworks, concepts, or evidence-based principles and practice.
Argue	Present a convincing, soundly reasoned case for and/or against.
Assess	Critically judge the value of a subject.
Comment on	Discuss, explain, and give your opinion on the ideas expressed. Use analogies or examples to support your response.
Compare	Look for similarities between the aspects mentioned. Emphasise similarities but mention differences where appropriate.
Contrast	Stress the differences between the aspects mentioned.
Critically analyse	Break up the subject into its main ideas and identify the underlying assumptions and questions that are NOT being asked. Relate the topic to theory, frameworks, concepts, or evidence-based principles and practice, emphasising the aspects that do not conform and questioning why.
Criticise	Make a judgement about the merit or truth of the facts or views mentioned, discussing both positive points and limitations. Support with evidence.
Define	Clearly state the exact meaning. Give the limits of the definition.
Describe	Give a detailed account of the characteristics of a subject, or retell the essential features of a story. Use the who, what, when, how, where, and why framework to describe all details.
Discuss	Analyse a subject from different points of view and come to a well-reasoned conclusion.

Instruction Word	Meaning
Evaluate	Examine the various aspects of a subject, highlighting positive and negative features. Make a judgment on the significance, relevance, value, importance, and quality.
Examine	Inspect in detail and investigate the implications.
Explain	Make clear the details. Show the reason for, underlying cause of, or the means by which something occurs. Examples may support the explanation.
Illustrate	Use examples. Where appropriate, provide a figure to facilitate the readers' understanding.
Indicate	Point out, make known, or show.
Integrate	Join together in a logical way, synthesising multiple viewpoints or ideas.
Interpret	Translate, solve, or comment on a subject, justifying your judgements and decisions.
Justify	Convince the audience of your decisions or conclusions by supporting these with sound academic evidence.
Outline	Give the main features or general principles of a subject. Leave out minor details.
Prove	Show the truth of a statement by logical argument or experimental results.
Relate	Show the connection between the points mentioned. Select appropriate words to show the relationship (e.g., likewise ..., in contrast ..., in support of ..., ... concurs ..., adds to..., correlates ...).
Review	Summarise and comment on important aspects.
State	Present the main points in a brief and clear sequence, usually omitting details or examples.
Summarise	Give the main points in order of importance or trace the argument briefly.
Trace	Identify and describe the development or history of something from some point, or from its origin.

Reviewed 23 July 2025