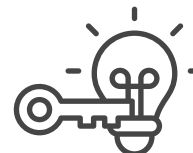


**Understanding how to approach essay questions can help you write more focused, organized, and effective responses under pressure. By learning to interpret prompts and structure your answers clearly, you'll improve both your confidence and your exam performance.**

### 1 Understand the Question

- Underline key action words like analyze, compare, or justify to clarify what the question is asking. This helps you stay focused and tailor your response to the task.



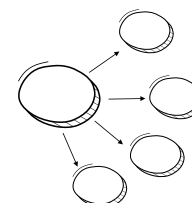
### 2 Know the Common Task Words

- Each prompt word requires a different approach.
- For example:
  - Define* asks for clarity.
  - Evaluate* needs evidence judgment.
  - Discuss* calls for balanced analysis.
- Recognizing these helps you respond appropriately and avoid missing the point.

*Flip to the back for more examples of task words*

### 3 Generate Content Quickly

- Use concept mapping or jot down key ideas to organize your thoughts under pressure.
- Practicing timed essays ahead of exams can improve your speed and confidence.



### 4 Make an Outline

- Outlining helps structure your essay, keep your arguments clear, and ensure you include all key points.
- If you run out of time, a strong outline can often still earn you partial marks.



#### Essay Structure

Introduction  
Thesis statement  
Body paragraphs  
Conclusion

### 5 Write Clearly and Directly

- Start with a focused opening that includes part of the question to stay on topic.
- Keep your writing clear, avoid unnecessary details, and ensure your handwriting is legible.



## Common Task Words

ANALYZE	Break into detailed parts. Discuss or interpret each part.
COMPARE	Examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences.
CONTRAST	Show differences between two or more items. Set in opposition.
CRITICIZE	Make judgments. Evaluate the worth of the subject. Criticism involves analysis and evaluation.
DEFINE	Explain the exact meaning of the term in relation to the course or subject. Determine the exact limits of the term.
DESCRIBE	Give a detailed account. List characteristics, qualities, and parts.
DISCUSS	Consider and debate the pros and cons of an issue. Evaluate and justify.
EVALUATE	Give your opinion or judgement or cite the opinions of experts. Include evidence to support the evaluation. Draw a conclusion.
EXPLAIN	Clarify an idea. Show logically how a concept is developed. Give the reasons for an event.
ILLUSTRATE	Explain, clarify, or support using examples.
INTERPRET	Explain the meaning. Describe, show relationships, comment on, and evaluate.
JUSTIFY	Argue in support of a decision or conclusion. Show that there is sufficient evidence and reason in favour of something. Support your argument with facts, logical reasoning, and examples.
LIST	List several ideas, aspects, events, things, qualities, reasons, etc. (Enumerate means the same thing.)
OUTLINE	Describe main ideas, characteristics, or events.
RELATE	Show the connections between ideas or events. Provide a larger context.

