

TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

<i>If the assignment requires you to...</i>	<i>... your essay or project should ...</i>
ANALYZE (OUTLINE/EXPLAIN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separate the matter at hand into key parts, essential elements; • break things down, consider the details; • identify causes/key factors or features/possible results.
COMPARE	note similarities and differences between two or more things (<i>not</i> at list, but an argument based on similarities and differences).
CONTRAST	note differences, dissimilarities, tensions between two or more things (<i>not</i> at list, but an argument).
EXAMINE (EXPLORE/INVESTIGATE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take a diagnostic approach; • enquire or look into closely, perhaps to uncover a hidden motive, cause, theme, etc.; • seek out core issues, suggest possible interpretations/solutions.
ARGUE	take a position on a given subject and support that approach; give reasons for or against something.
DEBATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present opposing viewpoints on a given subject, deliberate; • give reasons for and against something.
EVALUATE (JUDGE/CRITICIZE/ASSESS)	determine the value or significance of something.
DESCRIBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depict, present or delineate in words; • place more emphasis on <i>how</i> something occurs than on <i>why</i> it does.
DEFINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give the meaning of something; • present its nature or essential qualities.
TRACE	follow the course, development, history of something.
REVIEW	summarize the key aspects of the material at hand.
DOCUMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like “TRACE,” follow the development, course or history of something, but emphasize the use of written sources, references and citations in supporting your approach; • prove using written support material, sources and evidence.
DISCUSS	comment on, talk over, write about the topic at hand using whatever approach seems appropriate (i.e., any of the approaches listed in this chart).