

Here are the command words that are commonly used for essay questions:

1. **Explain.** This is a straightforward command word that is asking you to make clear the reasons for a situation, or the reasons why a series of events occurred.
2. **Support.** When asked to do this, you are being directed to give points in favour of a certain position. With this type of essay, the thesis is basically given to you in the question and you are just asked to support the thesis.
3. **Analyze.** Here you are being asked to examine the topic by considering and discussing each part or section of the topic.
4. **Compare.** When asked to do this, it is generally assumed that you will both compare and contrast the topic. Your task is to give similarities and differences for the topic being discussed.
5. **To what extent?** If these words are used as the command words in a topic, it is assumed that there are two positions possible on the topic. You are expected to weigh the strength of the two sides, and come to a conclusion about which side presents the stronger argument.
6. **Evaluate.** In this situation, you are being asked to make a judgment between two positions or arguments. You are being asked to weigh the arguments on both sides of the question, and come to a conclusion about which side presents the stronger position. In this way, it is similar to the "To what extent" question.
7. **Assess.** Here you are being asked to estimate the value of something. So you have to make a judgment and then use facts to prove your case. It is similar to "to what extent?"
8. **Discuss.** Here you must present the various points of view or ways of looking at a particular topic.
9. **Describe.** You must give a detailed description or account of an event, situation or topic.