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Task words

Analyse

Explain, clarify, give reasons for. Break an issue down into its component parts, discuss them and show how they interrelate to better understand an issue. Consider the different ways you can explore and investigate an issue and provide evidence for those ways of seeing them.

Critically analyse

Similar to 'analysis' (see above), but additionally questioning and testing the strength of your and others' analyses from different perspectives. This often means using the process of analysis to make an overarching objective, reasoned argument for your overall case or position.

Argue

Make a series of points that are supported by evidence and lead to a logical and coherent conclusion. You may make a case for and/or against some given point of view with the support of evidence.

Assess

Consider the value or importance of something, paying due attention to positive, negative and disputable aspects, and weighing them up. You might also cite the judgements of any known authorities as well as your own.

Critically assess

Similar to 'assess' (see above), but emphasising your judgements made about others' arguments, and about what you are assessing from different perspectives. This often means making a reasoned argument for your overall case, based on your judgements.

Apply

Put an idea or perspective into operation or use; show how the idea can be used in a particular situation. Show awareness of relevant skills, knowledge or understanding appropriate to the context.

Compare

Show how two or more ideas or pieces of information are similar (and, sometimes, different).

Contrast

Show how two or more ideas or pieces of information are different.

Critique

Challenge ideas, information or data, or address questions of quality, accuracy, relevance, and trustworthiness. Judge the merit or truth of the factors or views mentioned, including both strengths and weaknesses.

Debate

Present different perspectives on an issue.

Deduce

Draw reasoned conclusions from information provided.

Design

Conceive of an outline and plan how something will be done, made or achieved. Outline the purpose, stages, process, or system.

Develop

Build an idea or perspective on given information and evidence; allowing the perspective to advance or become more elaborate.

Implement

Put (eg, an idea, plan, decision) into effect.

Research

Gather material, information, and data from relevant sources on a subject. Research often implies or requires that you analyse the material, information, or data you found.

Predict

Estimate a future outcome as a consequence of something, based on knowledge, evidence or past experience.

Propose

Put forward an idea, plan, or suggestion to be considered by others.

Synthesise

Combine information or ideas from various sources that have not been combined before and draw relationships among them to describe the bigger picture, form new perspectives, or reveal new insights (see below).

Reflect

Consider information or a situation from a personal perspective, based on relevant knowledge or experience. You may need to produce a contemplative, balanced appraisal of an issue or piece of information.

Support or Substantiate

Strengthen arguments or points with evidence from authoritative sources.

Define

State the precise meaning or interpretation of something, giving enough detail to allow it to be distinguished from similar things. Where relevant, show you understand how the definition may be problematic.

Describe

Outlines the main aspects of an idea, topic or issue, or relays the sequence in which a series of things happened.

Discuss

Investigate or examine by argument. Examine key points and possible interpretations, sift and debate, giving reasons for and against. Discussion often requires you to explain which ideas or views seem stronger and why. Then, draw a conclusion.

Evaluate

Similar to 'assess' (see above). Make an appraisal of the worth of something, in light of its apparent truth; include your evidence-backed opinion. Evaluation requires you to make an overall judgement of something, explaining the extent to which it is for example, effective, useful or true. Evaluation is therefore sometimes more subjective and contestable than some kinds of pure assessment.

Critically evaluate

Similar to 'evaluate' (see above), use criteria to guide your assessment of which opinions, theories, models or items are preferable, but also showing how judgements vary from different perspectives and how some judgements are stronger than others. This means creating an objective, reasoned argument for your overall case, based on the evaluation from different perspectives.

Evidence

Provide support for an idea or argument using facts or information that indicate whether the idea or argument is valid, true, or reasonable. Evidence comes in many forms including data, insights (see below), quotations, paraphrased text, and real-life examples.

Examine

Present in depth; explore and discuss the implications.

Explain

Describe an idea, issue, or situation in detail with the support of relevant facts to make clear the causes, the context (ie, how it came to be), how it works and the consequences.

Explore

Consider an idea or issue broadly and thoroughly, searching out related and/or particularly relevant, interesting, or debatable points. Consider from a variety of viewpoints. 'Explore' may also relate to the act of investigating an issue where you look for all items, details, facts and information that may be relevant in books, academic journals, in relevant information databases and on the internet. A thorough exploration entails extensive coverage of the available information which means your search is broad and far reaching and include a variety of sources. A shallow exploration may not produce adequate information as it would be drawn from a limited number of sources.

Identify

Pick out what you regard as the key features or aspects of an idea, issue or situation, perhaps making clear the criteria you use.

Illustrate

Give examples of something to help describe or explain it, or use diagrams (see below), graphs charts or other visual aids to help describe or explain it.

Interpret

Clarify or explain (see above) the meaning of information, an action or a perspective, perhaps indicating how the information or action relates to some other information, action or perspective.

Issue

An important topic for debate or discussion; something worth thinking and raising questions about.

Justify

Express valid reasons for accepting a particular action, interpretation or conclusion while considering different possible views and ideas. Justification is common when arguing a case (see 'argue' above).

Outline

Indicate the key aspects of a topic, or key occurrences in a sequence of events, possibly setting them within a clear structure or framework to show how they interrelate.

Summarise

Briefly state the main features of an argument or issue, omitting all unnecessary detail and side-issues. A summary should be concise and precise.

Content

Concept

An abstract idea, principle, construct, theory, framework or notion.

Insight

An accurate and deep understanding of an issue or phenomenon. Insights denote the discovery of a relevant, actionable and previously unknown or unrealized reality about a topic, issue or phenomenon, as the result of extensive research and analysis. An insight offers a new understanding of an issue or phenomenon around which arguments can be built and on which judgements can be based.

Commercially sound recommendations

Suggestions that demonstrate the exercising of good judgement on commercial opportunities, demonstrating practical business knowledge, having an instinct for what will be good for the business and considering obvious or potential pitfalls. It involves recognising how different actions or strategies can impact a company's cashflow, profitability and success. Commercially sound recommendations derive from careful and well considered analysis and execution.

The ability to make commercially sound recommendations shows that you have a grasp of how business operates. You keep in mind the vision or purpose of the business, the strategic direction it is taking, and the tactical approach of the various business functions (eg, production, sales and finance while considering any legal and regulatory issues), so that it achieves its goals as effectively as possible.

Coherent

Logical and well organized; easy to understand and clear. Information and arguments are integrated (see integrated argument below). Component parts and sections lead to a harmonious whole.

Integrated argument

Linking and/or combining individual arguments together to make a coherent, overarching case. Integrated arguments are organised so that they work together to build structured reasoning and may also be interrelated in the discussion.

Rationale

A set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action or belief.

Diagram

A drawing, chart, plan, or graph; may also be called a 'figure'. A simplified drawing showing the appearance, structure, or workings of something; a schematic representation. Diagrams should be labelled and there should be an accompanying explanation, called a 'caption'.

Execution

Creativity

Academic writing depends on structure, thesis statements, supporting arguments, correct grammar and accurate citations. However, you might express originality and innovativeness in the sources you use for research, analysis, and as evidence to support your arguments. You might identify new ways to combine your arguments or insights to generate novel interpretations of information and perspectives. You might demonstrate originality in the written, verbal and visual expression of the work, for example, by giving relevant and interesting but unique examples, using imaginative language and visuals like metaphors, analogies, pictures and graphs, or by supplementing the work with additional media (eg, adding a video).

Academic literature

Academic literature usually written by academics who are experts or specialists in a field. Its purpose is to present research findings and expand knowledge in a discipline or field. Academic literature is typically peer-reviewed and takes the form of academic journal articles, textbooks, books, subject-specific reference works (eg., encyclopaedias), scholarly monographs and expert reports. Articles range in length by may be up to 30 pages to provide in depth coverage of topic.

Practitioner literature

Practitioners are people who practice a profession (c.f. an academic who studies a discipline). Practitioner literature is usually written by a practitioner of specialist journalist. Its purpose is to report on business trends, report on an industry or provide practical advice for dealing with a business issue. Articles range from short to long. Practitioner literature might take the form of industry reports, industry journals and magazines, news media, white papers and blogs.

Authoritative

Can be trusted as accurate and reliable, but also demonstrates the author's confidence, knowledge and command of the material.

Methodology

A methodology is the design process for carrying out research. It denotes a general research strategy that outlines the way that research will be (or has been) undertaken, and specifies the methods used. These 'methods', outlined in the methodology, define the approaches taken for data collection and analysis, and sometimes explain how specific results are to be calculated.

Experimentation

The action or process of trying out new ideas, methods, or activities to discover what effect they have.

Problem solving

The process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues. Solving a problem might require you to define the problem; determine the cause of the problem; identify, select or and prioritize alternatives for a solution, and recommend or implement a solution.

Sources

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/glossary-task-words>

<https://www.port.ac.uk/student-life/help-and-advice/study-skills/written-assignments/essays-task-words>

https://www.manchester.edu/OAA/Library/New_Library/Articles/WhatDeDiff.pdf

<https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/article/downloads/Task%20Words%20Factsheet.pdf>

This glossary was designed for use on the Level 4 Principles of Marketing module. Use as is or adapt the glossary as you see fit for use on your module.

Questions or feedback?

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