

## “DO” WORDS IN ESSAY TITLES

“Do” words are action words (verbs) which tell you to approach the essay in a certain way. They are crucial because they tell you what you actually have to do in your essay. If you don’t do what the “do” words tell you to do, you will lose marks!

Here is a list of the most common “do” words in essay titles, and what they tell you to do. There is a more detailed list in Stella Cottrell’s *Study Skills Handbook* (reference below).

<b>“DO” WORD</b>	<b>WHAT IT TELLS YOU TO DO</b>
Analyse	Look at in close detail; break up into its parts; identify the most important points and features.
Compare	Identify how two or more things are similar; point out the possible consequences of this.
Contrast	Identify how two or more things are different; point out the possible consequences of this.
Critically evaluate	Weigh up the arguments for and against something, looking at the evidence on both sides of the argument.
Define	Give the meaning of a word or phrase.
Describe	Give the characteristics of something; outline the sequence of events.
Discuss	Give the main characteristics of something; look at arguments for and against; consider any implications.
Evaluate	Assess the importance or usefulness of something, using evidence.
Explain	Say why something is as it is, or why something happens.
Outline or summarise	Give the only the main features of something, or the main points in an argument.