



Direction Words

Teaching and Learning Unit Faculty of Economics and Commerce



Direction Words are very important in academic study. Your lecturer will often use them when advising you, and they will expect you to know what they mean.

Direction words are words like "compare", "list", "outline", "contrast" and so on; in other words, direction words tell you to *do* something.

Usually you will find direction words in lists of essay topics. For example:

1. *Compare and contrast the Marxist account of society and social change with the capitalist account. Which is more plausible?*
2. *Discuss the role of actuaries in the insurance industry.*
3. *Analyse three models of marketing. Which one best fits small business?*
4. *Trace the history of accounting practices. Show how these methods have been adopted in modern industry.*
5. *Evaluate the contribution of economic theories to raising living standards in rural areas.*

These are realistic essay questions that might have to deal with. Clearly if you don't know what "compare and contrast", "discuss", "analyse", "trace", and "evaluate" means you will be stuck!

Over the page we provide a Direction Words Jumble. The direction words are not matched correctly with their meaning. Match the meaning of the following words with their most accurate meaning. A dictionary will help. **NB: This is a very difficult exercise.** Everyone has trouble with this as the meanings of some direction words are very close. *Some* can be substituted, but not many.

Be careful, the meanings are very close!! Start with the easiest words first.

Do the exercise BEFORE you look at the answers.

ANSWERS:

<i>State</i>	Present, say or write in a brief, clear form
<i>Summarise</i>	Examine the main points briefly
<i>Analyse</i>	Consider the various components of the whole and try to describe the inter-relationships between them
<i>Compare</i>	Look at the similarities and differences between
<i>Define</i>	Explain the exact meaning of
<i>Evaluate</i>	Examine the various sides of a question and try to arrive at a judgement
<i>Determine</i>	Come to conclusions about after calculations or discussion
<i>Explain</i>	Give an explanation of, give details of, make plain
<i>Criticise</i>	Give your judgement about the merits of theories or opinions and back your judgements by discussing the evidence
<i>Describe</i>	Tell about, give a detailed account of something (no need for your opinion)
<i>Justify</i>	Show adequate grounds for decisions and conclusions
<i>Calculate</i>	Work out exactly
<i>Enumerate</i>	Give a listing
<i>Identify</i>	Establish or say what it is, distinguish from other items, point out
<i>Account for</i>	Give reasons for
<i>Suggest</i>	Give ideas about, make a suggestion
<i>Examine</i>	Look at thoroughly, inquire into
<i>Discuss</i>	Investigate every aspect of, inquire into, tell points for an against and reach some conclusion of your own
<i>Distinguish between</i>	Show or explain the difference between
<i>Contrast</i>	Bring out the differences between two things, compare by showing the differences
<i>Estimate</i>	Work out an approximate or rough figure or judgement
<i>Outline</i>	Give a brief summary, give the main features
<i>Give an account of</i>	Describe, give a list of reasons for something
<i>Derive</i>	Work out by reasoning or deduction (from general to specific)
<i>Illustrate</i>	Make clear by use of examples in some subjects using a diagram to explain something
<i>Review</i>	Make a survey of a subject and examine critically
<i>Trace</i>	Follow the development of a topic from a particular point
<i>Relate</i>	To narrate or tell about, show how things are connected to each other and to what extent they are alike
<i>Interpret</i>	Give the meaning of, and usually, to give your judgement also

Directions Words Jumble

The first one has been done for you: "Compare" = "Look at the similarities and differences between".

1. State	Look at similarities and differences between [4]
2. Summarise	Work out exactly
3. Analyse	Give a brief summary, give the main features
4. Compare	Give reasons for, explain
5. Define	Give your judgement about the merits of theories or opinions and back your judgements by discussing the evidence
6. Evaluate	Show or explain the differences between
7. Determine	Investigate every aspect of, inquire into, tell points for and against and reach some conclusion of your own
8. Explain	Give some ideas about, make a suggestion
9. Criticise	Work out an approximate /rough figure or judgement
10. Describe	Present, say or write something in a brief, clear form
11. Justify	Give a listing, specify
12. Calculate	To give the meaning of, and usually, to give your own judgement also
13. Enumerate	Work out by reasoning or deduction (from general to specific)
14. Identify	Give an explanation of, give details of, give the meaning of, interpret, make plain
15. Account for	Look at thoroughly, inquire into
16. Suggest	Tell about, give a description of; a detailed account of something (no need for opinion or evaluation)
17. Examine	Describe, give a list of reasons for something
18. Discuss	Bring out the differences between two things, compare by showing the differences
19. Distinguish between	Establish or say what it is, distinguish from other items, point out
20. Contrast	Come to conclusions about after calculations/discussion
21. Estimate	Examine the main points briefly
22. Outline	Examine the various sides to a question and try to arrive at a judgement; make an appraisal of the value of something
23. Give an account of	Make clear by the use of examples – in some subjects/instances, use of a diagram to explain something
24. Derive	Show adequate grounds for decisions and conclusions
25. Illustrate	Consider the various components of the whole and try to describe the inter-relationships between them
26. Review	to narrate or tell about; to show how things are connected to each other, and to what extent they are alike
27. Trace	Make a survey of a subject by examining it critically
28. Relate	Follow the development of a topic from a particular point
29. Interpret	Explain the exact meaning of