

ACADEMIC WRITING

BE TENTATIVE

You need to be tentative in your writing when making a claim that you cannot prove. It allows you to be more evaluative and explore different interpretations. You may wish to use phrases such as:

It could suggest...	This might mean...
It may imply...	Arguably...
Some people may argue...	Perhaps this signifies..

USE ANALYTICAL VERBS

You use analytical verbs to precisely analyse text. The key is to use the right one for the analysis you are making.

Suggests	Emphasises	Shows	Presents
Implies	Contrasts	Confers	Reinforces
Symbolises	Highlights	Connotes	Creates

USE ADVERB PHRASES

Some adverbial phrases are really effective at suggesting an evaluative approach and signify to the reader that you have a strong line of argument. These can be used at the start of a sentence to quickly show your attitude to the idea that you are presenting.

Critically	Arguably	Naturally
Crucially	Clearly	Strikingly
Significantly	Conversely	Possibly

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SENTENCE STARTERS AND CONNECTIVES

Listing Points	<p>Firstly, Secondly, Finally, In the first place.... To begin with.... In addition to this... Furthermore, Not only...but also More importantly...</p>	Comparing	<p>Compared with... Similarly... Likewise... Equally... ...in comparison with... As with.... ...are similar in that... In the same way...</p>
Emphasising	<p>Mainly... Mostly... Usually... Most often...</p>	Re-phrasing	<p>In other words... That is... To put it more simply...</p>
Giving examples	<p>For example, For instance, Such as... ...as can be seen... ...as is shown by... Take the case of... This can be proven by...</p>	Contrasting	<p>However, On the other hand... ...although... Despite this... On the contrary... Instead... ...whereas... ...while...</p>
Changing topic	<p>Turning to... As regards... With regard to... Concerning... Moving onto... Now to consider... In contrast...</p>	Conceding	<p>Although... While it is true that... In spite of... Despite this... However...yet... Still... Nevertheless...</p>
Cause and Effect	<p>...so... As a result of... ...because... This means that... Due to the fact that ...due to... ...caused by...</p>	Summing up	<p>In conclusion... In summary... Overall... To conclude... In brief... On the whole...</p>

KEY WORDS USED IN ESSAY TITLES

Here is a list of the most common keywords used in essay titles with an explanation for each.

Account for - requires an answer that gives the reasons for the subject of the question.

Analyse - requires an answer that takes apart an idea, concept or statement in order to consider all the factors it consists of. Answers of this type should be very methodical and logically organised.

Compare - requires an answer that sets items side by side and shows their similarities and differences. A balanced (fair, objective) answer is expected.

Consider - requires an answer in which the students describe and give their thoughts on the subject.

Contrast - requires an answer that points out only the differences between two items.

Criticise - requires an answer that points out mistakes or weaknesses, and that also indicates any favourable aspects of the subject of the question. It requires a balanced answer.

Define - requires an answer that explains the precise meaning of a concept. A definition answer will include a definition, probably expanded.

Describe - requires an answer that says what something is like, how it works and so on.

Discuss - requires an answer that explains an item or concept, and then gives details about it with supportive information, examples, points for and against, and explanations for the facts put forward. It is important to give both sides of an argument and come to a conclusion.

Evaluate/Assess - requires an answer that decides and explains how great, valuable or important something is. The judgement should be backed by a discussion of the evidence or reasoning involved.

Explain - requires an answer that offers a rather detailed and exact explanation of an idea or principle, or a set of reasons for a situation or attitude.

Explore - requires an answer that examines the subject thoroughly and considers it from a variety of viewpoints.

Illustrate - requires an answer that consists mainly of examples to demonstrate or prove the subject of the question. It is often added to another instruction.

In relation to – requires an answer that gives the reasons for the subject of the question.

With/by reference to – requires you to refer to a secondary source, a specific text or idea.

Justify - requires an answer that gives only the reasons for a position or argument. Answer the main objections likely to be made of them. Note, however, that the proposition to be argued may be a negative one (e.g. Justify the abolition of the death penalty.)

Prove/Disprove - both of these require answers that demonstrate the logical arguments and/or evidence connected with a proposition prove requires the 'pro' points, and disprove requires the 'contra' points.

Role – what part something plays, how it works, especially in co-operation with others.

Significance – requires you to explain why a certain aspect of a text, an idea or principle is particularly important.

State - requires an answer that expresses the relevant points briefly and clearly without lengthy discussion or minor details.

Summarise/Outline - requires an answer that contains a summary of all the available information about a subject, i.e. only the main points and not the details should be included. Questions of this type often require short answers.

To what extent is X true? - requires an answer that discusses and explains in what ways X is true and in what ways X is not true.