

Common Academic Writing Tasks

ANALYZE	Break the subject (an object, event, or concept) down into parts, and explain the various parts.
COMPARE	Show how two things are similar as well as different; include details or examples.
CONTRAST	Show how two things are different; include details or examples.
CRITIQUE	Point out both the good and bad points of something.
DEFINE	Give an accurate meaning of a term with enough detail to show that you really understand it.
DESCRIBE	Write about the subject so the reader can easily visualize it; tell how it looks or happened, including how, who, where, why.
DISCUSS	Give a complete and detailed answer, including important characteristics and main points.
EVALUATE	Give your opinion of the value of the subject; discuss its good and bad points, strengths and weaknesses.
EXPLAIN	Give the meaning of something; give facts and details that make the idea easy to understand.
ILLUSTRATE	Make the point or idea clear by giving examples.
INTERPRET	Explain the meaning of a reading selection; discuss the results or the effects of something.
JUSTIFY	Give good reasons that support a particular decision, action, or event.
PERSUADE	Give reasons in order to get someone to do or believe something; appeal to the reader's feelings and mind.
RESPOND	State your overall reaction to the content, then support your individual opinions with specific reasons and examples, making sure to refer back to the reading.
STATE	Give the main points in brief, clear form.
SUMMARIZE	Briefly cover the main points; use a paragraph form and don't include any personal opinions about the content.
TRACE	Tell about an event or process in chronological order.

(Kinsella, Son