

## Verbs Used in Test Questions

- **Analyze:** Take apart a concept or a process, and explain it step by step. You could encounter analysis questions in any discipline, from science to history. An analysis question is usually a long essay question.
- **Comment:** If a test question prompts you to comment on a fact or statement, you will need to explain the relevance of the fact or statement. For example, you could be prompted to comment on a particular amendment quoted in a government exam, or comment on a passage that is quoted on a literature exam.
- **Compare:** Show likenesses and differences when you compare two events, theories, or processes.
- **Contrast:** Used for showing differences between two processes or theories, a contrast question could appear on a literature exam, a history exam, a science exam, and more.
- **Define:** Provide a definition of a key term you've covered in class. This is usually a short essay type of question.
- **Demonstrate:** If you are asked to demonstrate, you must provide proof of your answer by using an example. A demonstration could be a physical action, a visual illustration, or a written statement.
- **Diagram:** Demonstrate your answer by drawing a chart or other visual element to illustrate your points.
- **Discuss:** When a teacher instructs you to "discuss" a topic, he or she is trying to determine whether you understand both sides of an issue. You will need to demonstrate that you know the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. You should pretend that you are having a conversation with a friend and voicing both sides.
- **Enumerate:** Enumerating is providing a list in a particular order. When you enumerate a list of items, you may need to specify why items go in a particular order.
- **Examine:** If you are prompted to examine a topic, you will use your own judgment to explore (in writing) a topic and comment on significant elements,

events, or acts. Provide your opinion and explain how or why you came to your conclusions.

- **Explain:** Provide an answer that gives a “why” response. Provide a complete overview of the problem and solution for a particular issue or process. This is a typical form of question used in science exams.
- **Illustrate:** If you are expected to illustrate a topic, you should use examples to show or explain a topic. Depending on the subject matter, you might use words, drawings, diagrams, or behavior to illustrate an answer.
- **Interpret:** Interpretation of a subject calls for the ability to read between the lines and draw conclusions. You will be expected to explain the meaning of an act, action, or passage in an interpretation.
- **Justify:** If you are asked to justify something, you will be expected to use examples or evidence to show why (in your opinion) it is correct. You must provide reasons for your conclusions and opinions.
- **List:** Lists are used in every discipline. In list questions you must provide a series of answers. If you are expected to memorize a certain number of items for an exam, be sure to remember how many there are in total.
- **Outline:** Provide an explanation with headings and subheadings. This is a common instruction word found on literature exams.
- **Order:** Provide a chronological or value-based answer by listing several items (terms or events) in correct placement. You could be asked to place events in a certain order on a history exam, or you could be asked to put a scientific process in the correct order.
- **Prove:** To prove an answer, you must use evidence (this could be numbers) or reasoning to solve a problem. Tests that require proof normally appear on science or math exams.
- **Relate:** Relate could mean a few different things on an exam: 1) You could be asked to show a relationship between two events or items by discussing their similarities; or 2) You could be required to provide a written account of something (as in literature).
- **Review:** If a test question prompts you to review a process or event, you should recall and repeat all the most important elements or facts that you learned about a specific topic in essay form.

- **Trace:** To trace an event or process, go over it in detail and explain it step by step. You could trace an event that occurred in history or you could trace a process in science.

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