

SOCIAL STUDIES 11

COMMAND TERM LIST FOR WRITTEN-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Successful results can be achieved by addressing the specifics of the question. Most questions contain a key-word or command term. The following list will help students to read, analyze, and respond to written-response questions more effectively.

AGREE OR DISAGREE	Support or refute a statement; give the positive or negative features; express an informed opinion one way or the other; list the advantages for or against.
ANALYZE	To divide a complex whole into its component parts. This process should involve not only breaking down the whole, but also showing the relationship between the various elements.
ASSESS THE DEGREE / TO WHAT EXTENT	Command words such as these strongly suggest to the student that two schools of thought exist about a given subject. These questions often involve weighing the relative merit of conflicting points of view; e.g., negative vs. positive, strong vs. weak, fundamental vs. immediate.
COMPARE / COMPARE AND CONTRAST	Give an estimate of the similarity and dissimilarity of one event or issue to another; give an estimate of the relationship between two things.
CONTRAST	Give an estimate of the difference between two things.
DEFINE	Give the meaning of a word or concept and provide a relevant context.
DESCRIBE	Give a detailed account of a situation.
DISCUSS	Present the various points of view as in a debate or argument. Points-of-view arising from the topic should be supported and/or challenged.
EVALUATE	Making a judgement which involves determining the value of a statement and/or assessing the relative significance of that idea.
EXPLAIN	Make plain or intelligible the relationship which is asked for; e.g., Explain the similarities between . . . , or Explain the differences between
GIVE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF	Present information which determines the importance of an event or issue. Quite often used to show causation.
IDENTIFY	Clearly establish the identity of something based on an understood set of considerations; recognize the unique qualities of something and state the criteria used to identify it. Often used in conjunction with EXPLAIN.
JUSTIFY	Defend or agree with a particular, predetermined point-of-view; give evidence, reasons, or examples.
LIST	Give a catalogue of names, ideas, or events which belong to a particular class of items.
OUTLINE	Give a description of only the main features; summarize the principal parts of a thing, idea, or event.

SUMMARIZE	Give an account of the main points. This implies a degree of evaluation as the student weighs the relative merit of the more important versus the more trivial.
SUPPORT / REFUTE	Give the points in favour of, or opposed to, a predetermined point of view or particular position. Also see AGREE / DISAGREE. While students should generally support or refute the given statement, their responses may include opposing points.