



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Essay Question Direction Words

- **Analyze** - break down a problem into separate factors and / or relationships
- **Categorize** - place items under headings
- **Classify** - place items in related groups
- **Compare** - tell how things are alike
- **Contrast** - tell how things are different
- **Criticize** - make a judgment and support it
- **Deduce** - trace the course; derive a conclusion by reasoning
- **Defend** - give enough details to prove the statement
- **Define** - give the meaning
- **Describe** - give an account in words; trace the outline or present a picture
- **Diagram** - use pictures, graphs, charts, mind maps, flow charts to show relationships of details to main ideas
- **Discuss** - consider the various points of view by presenting all sides of the issue
- **Distinguish** - tell how this is different from others similar to it
- **Enumerate** - list all possible items
- **Evaluate** - make a judgment based on the evidence and support it; give the good and bad points
- **Illustrate** - give examples, pictures, charts, diagrams or concrete examples to clarify your answer
- **Interpret** - express your thinking by giving the meaning as you see it
- **Justify** - give some evidence by supporting your statement with facts
- **List** - write in a numbered fashion
- **Outline** - use a specific and shortened form to organize main ideas, supporting details and examples
- **Paraphrase** - put in your own words
- **Predict** - present solutions that could happen if certain variables were present
- **Prove** - provide factual evidence to back up the truth of the statement
- **Relate** - show the relationship among concepts

- **Review** - examine the information critically
- **State** - establish by specifying
- **Summarize** - condense the main points in the fewest words possible
- **Synthesize** - combine parts or pieces of an idea, situation or event
- **Trace** - describe in steps the progression of something
- **Verify** - confirm or establish the truth of accuracy of point of view with supporting examples, evidence, and facts

Typical Reasons for Poor Test Performance in Students

- No concern / negative attitude about testing
- Did not read or understand directions
- Was not organized
- Did not get enough sleep
- Changed too many answers
- Did not budget time effectively
- Overcome with test anxiety
- Suffered from a memory block during test
- Lacked testing strategies
- Did not check answers when finished
- Left too many answers blank

Ways to Perform Better

- Learn good study habits and apply them
- Train yourself to take tests (practice)
- Learn and apply test-taking strategies
- Be positive
- Be organized
- Get plenty of rest before testing
- Eat healthy before testing

