Dyslexia and Study Skills

Answering essay questions

1. Look at the question and highlight the key words

2. Identify which words are:

   Instruction words – words which tell you how to answer. For example: describe, compare, discuss

   Subject words – words which tell you the topic of the question

   Key aspect words – words which tell you the limit of the question

   Other significant words – words which give you more information

3. Highlight these parts of the question.

   For example:

   ‘Compare and contrast forms of rural settlement in at least two European regions in the later middle ages.’

   - Instruction words
   - Subject
   - Key aspect words
   - Other significant words

4. Identify what the instruction words mean:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>What you need to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account for</td>
<td>Explain why something is as it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Separate the topic into parts and discuss each of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Show how things are similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Show how things are different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticise</td>
<td>Give strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Give clear meanings to show how something is different to similar things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Explain features of a subject; use a pattern such as the order in which something happened (dates) or where it occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Analyse carefully and give reasons for and against: use detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Give your opinion based on facts: emphasise what experts have said. Indicate how well or badly something works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Divide up and describe the different parts or sections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### 5. Use images which help you answer the question

- Compare what is similar about each
- Contrast what is different about each
- Analyse - look closely at all the parts and how they relate. Separate the topic into parts and think about each part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tropical</th>
<th>Moderate to subtropical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thick peel</td>
<td>Thin peel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranges</td>
<td>Apples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came to Europe from India</td>
<td>Came from Turkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fruit**
- **Grow on trees**
- **Give juice**

### 6. Use a template to gather your answer together

- **Main point**
  - **Reason 1**
  - **Reason 2**
    - **Main point**
    - **Main point**
    - **Main point**
    - **Main point**

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