

# LBCC Writing Center: Assignment Vocabulary & Tips

Do you wish assignments were easier to understand?  
Do you like brief explanations?  
Then, do we have vocabulary for you!

Read through your assignment at least once, and then look for **verbs** (action words).  
Here is a list with the meanings of common verbs you may find:

## Information Verbs

**Define or Identify:** Describe the meaning or properties of something.

**Research:** Gather information about a subject from outside sources, usually analyzing that information.

**Summarize:** Briefly state the main points of an artifact, such as an essay, film, painting or other work.

**Explain:** Give reasons why or examples of how something happens.

**Illustrate or Demonstrate:** Show how a subject works by using examples.

## Interpretation Verbs

**Justify or Persuade:** Convince an audience that you are right.

**Evaluate or Assess:** Weigh the positive and negative aspects of a topic.

**Respond:** React to a subject and support this reaction with examples, facts, and reason.

**Argue:** Take a stance and defend it using reason and evidence.

**Analyze:** Look at how elements of your topic work together to form an effective whole.

## Relation Verbs

**Reflect:** Show you have thought in depth about a topic.

**Compare or Contrast:** Emphasize similarities and differences.

**Synthesize:** Combine two or more ideas into one concept and have a clear reason for doing so.

**Trace:** Outline how a subject has changed and developed over time.

**Relate:** Talk about the connections between the topic and something else.

- Pay special attention to these details:
  - Specific requirements, like length, formatting, and citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago).
  - The due date. Make sure to plan ahead! Give yourself plenty of time to pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and visit the Writing Center and your instructor's office hours if you want to.
  - Do you need to do any outside research? If so, plan to give yourself additional time before beginning your essay. If you need to do an interview, set it up right away.
- As you look through the assignment, write a list of questions you may have for your instructor. If you don't have time to ask these questions in class, plan to visit your instructor during office hours. These can be found listed on the instructor website or in the class syllabus.
- And lastly, keep your assignment sheet nearby and refer to it often as you work on your paper. This will help you stay focused on the needs of the assignment, and you will be less likely to miss requirements.

For more information or clarification, come see us in the Writing Center! (Learning Center WH-226)

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