

Excerpt from “Writing Assignments a the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry”, The New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry, 2003.

Assessments....Getting Started

1. Analyse the question.

Start by reading the question carefully and underline the key words that tell you what is being asked for and how you are expected to answer the question.

2. Be clear on the terminology used in the assessment.

Analyse	analysis refers to the ability to break down material parts; investigate between parts.
Argue	Present the case for and/or against a particular position
Compare	Examine characteristics of the objects in question with a view to demonstrating their similarities.
Contrast	Examine characteristics of the objects in question for the purpose of demonstrating differences.
Criticise	Give your judgement about the merit of opinions about the truth of facts; supporting your judgement with a discussion of the evidence.

Critically Analyse

Do not merely accept everything you read; think about it, what does it mean? Is this a reasonable argument? If so, why? If not, why not?
Identify strengths and areas for improvement. Give reasons for these.

Define	Set down a precise meaning of a word or phrase.
Describe	Give an account of
Discuss	Present the different aspects of a question or problem
Evaluate	Evaluation is concerned with the ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose. The judgements are based on definite criteria.
Examine	Present in depth and investigate the implications

Illustrate	Explain and make clear by the use of concrete examples, or by the use of a figure or diagram.
Interpret	Bring out the meaning of, and make clear and explicit, usually also giving your own judgement.
Outline	Give the main features or general principles of a subject, omitting minor details, and emphasising structure and relationship.
Review	Make a survey of, examining the subject critically.
State	Specify fully and clearly
Summarise	Give a concise account of the chief points or substance of a matter, omitting details and examples.

3. You are also welcome to seek support from your Trainer at any time during your course. We are happy to review first drafts and let you know whether you are on the right track or if you need to further work on some areas.