

MURPHY BI-WEEKLY WRITING TIP

Understanding Instruction Key Words

Dear Murphy Students:

Welcome to the Spring semester! Where do we start?

Usually with the assignment prompt or instructions. However, it can be unclear what exactly the professor is asking us to do. This week's tip will help define a few common words professors use in their instructions to help clarify what to do.

Common Key Words

Describe:

Give details about something (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How; or the 5 senses)

Example:

Describe how small group instruction can be implemented in the classroom.

Answer:

Who implements it? **What** are the steps to implement it? **When** is it implemented? **Where?** **Why?**

Explain:

- Give reasons why or how + evidence to support
- Make something clear

Example:

Explain the advantages and disadvantages of student-centered teaching

Answer:

What are the advantages? **Why?**
Any **examples or evidence?**
What are the disadvantages? **Why?**
Any **examples or evidence?**

Analyze:

Divide something into parts + show how the parts connect to what's being asked

Example:

Analyze the impact of student-centered learning on students.

Answer:

What are the different **parts/components** of student-centered learning?
How do **these parts/components** affect **students?**

Evaluate:

Judge the overall strengths and weaknesses of something + give evidence/examples

Example:

Evaluate small group instruction as a teaching strategy.

Answer:

What are the **strengths** of small group instruction? What are the **weaknesses?**
Is it **overall a good strategy?** **Why?**

<https://murphywc.commons.gc.cuny.edu/bi-weekly-writing-tips/>

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2. [Register for an account](#)
3. Log in and select the "Writing Support (All Campuses)" calendar.
4. Choose any of the available white rectangles.
5. Fill out the form with your assignment info.

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If you have questions or want to put this into practice, feel free to contact me! 😊