

Year 11: GCSE revision



NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ACADEMY

Essay skills

Know your command words that often come up in exams:

Analyse

Break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.

Annotate

Add to a diagram, image or graphic a number of words that describe and/or explain features, rather than just identify them (which is labelling).

Assess

Consider several options or arguments and weigh them up so as to come to a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.

Calculate

Work out the value of something.

Critically

Often occurs before 'Assess' or 'Evaluate' inviting an examination of an issue from the point of view of a critic with a particular focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the points of view being expressed.

Define..., What is meant by...

State the precise meaning of an idea or concept. There is usually a low tariff of marks for this.

Describe

Give an account in words of a phenomenon which may be an entity, an event, a feature, a pattern, a distribution or a process. For example, if describing a landform say what it looks like, give some indication of size or scale, what it is made of, and where it is in relation to something else (field relationship).

Discuss

Set out both sides of an argument (for and against), and come to a conclusion related to the content and emphasis of the discussion. There should be some evidence of balance, though not necessarily of equal weighting.

