# Question verbs

Understand what they mean, and how to use them.

**Analyse**

| What it means: | Examine something in detail, **without judging** it. Provide both the evidence, and your findings. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Analyse the following requirements and separate them into functional and technical requirements.* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my analysis? | An analysis is an examination of data only. You do not need to give examples. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Making a judgment on your analysis result, instead of simply providing the result. |

**Assess**

| What it means: | Evaluate the nature, or quality, of something, looking at the **positives** (e.g., benefits) **and negatives** (e.g., risks) of what you are evaluating. You are **judging** something. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Assess whether the supplier's tender response to Question 1 properly addresses the evaluation criterion.* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Long.<br><br>An assessment could be several lines of text, or pages of text. Read the question and carefully determine how much text is required. If the whole assignment centres on this assessment, then obviously a few lines of text are insufficient. If an assessment question is one of many questions in an assignment, then you may be able to limit your response to a few lines. |
| Should I give examples that support my assessment? Yes | Yes. Provide one or more examples to support positive and negative factors. This gives your response credibility. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Giving a short answer to an assessment question that requires a detailed evaluation. It suggests you have not read the question. Not "balancing" the evaluation by focusing only on the positive or negative factors. This informs the reader that you have properly considered the question. |

## Calculate

| What it means: | Work out the answer, using math. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Calculate total contract value, including all variation additional costs.* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my calculation? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Performing the calculations mentally, without using a calculator or spreadsheet to check the math. This results in errors to basic math questions.<br><br>Forgetting small but important details, like whether to include GST / VAT, or the currency if a foreign currency is used. |

## Compare

| What it means: | Examine two or more things, to identify the similarities and / or differences among them. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Compare the price response of each supplier and identify the most competitive price.* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Long.<br><br>An assessment could be several lines of text, or pages of text. Read the |

| | question and carefully determine how much text is required. |
|---|---|
| Should I give examples that support my comparison? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Making a judgment on your comparison result, instead of simply providing the similarities and differences. |

## Consider

| | |
|---|---|
| What it means: | Give thought to something. |
| A typical question: | *Consider the safety component of this tender. Do you think the supplier has properly addressed our safety requirements?* |
| Short or long answer: | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | The verb is connected to another instruction in the question, because simply *considering* something isn't answering a question. Make sure you properly answer the *second* instruction in the question. |

**Contrast**

| What it means: | Like **Differentiate**, but the differences are likely to be significant. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Contrast current Procurement Policy to the organisation's policy one year ago.* |

**Decide**

| What it means: | Make a choice after considering two or more alternatives. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Decide which procurement strategy provides the most efficient and defensible outcome for this purchase.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my decision? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Unless you are asked to also provide an assessment (see **Assess**), in other words, stating the positives and negatives on what you are deciding, don't provide a judgment of why you chose something. |

**Define**

| | |
|---|---|
| What it means: | Describe the meaning of something. |
| A typical question: | *Define the term "value for money".* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my definition? | Only if you are asked to provide examples. Make sure you provide the exact number of examples they require. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Don't use acronyms or abbreviations in your description.<br><br>Don't cut and paste someone else's definition unless you are asked to state that specific definition, or you risk the reader identifying that you have submitted something that is not your own work. |

**Describe**

| | |
|---|---|
| What it means: | Explain how something looks, or works, or a situation, in detail. |
| A typical question: | *Describe the Invitation to Offer tender process, from initial client engagement until contract execution.* |
| Short or long answer: Long | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my description? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Check your text to make sure it is easy to understand and not esoteric |

| | (that other people understand what you mean). |
|---|---|

## Differentiate

| What it means: | Explain the differences between two or more things. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Differentiate supplier responses to the tender, in regard to their unique approach to the requirements.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my differentiation? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Don't provide a judgment of whether one thing is better or worse than another thing. |

## Discuss

| What it means: | Identical to **Assess**. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Discuss the reasons why the evaluation team did not select supplier B as the successful supplier.* |

## Evaluate

| What it means: | Identical to **Assess**. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Evaluate the tender evaluation criteria in their effectiveness in identifying a capable supplier.* |

**Explain**

| | |
|---|---|
| What it means: | Make something clearer to understand. |
| A typical question: | *Explain the tender process sin granular detail.* |
| Short or long answer: | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my explanation? | Only if you are asked to provide examples. Make sure you provide the exact number of examples they require. |
| Common mistakes people make: | People sometimes confuse this verb with **Assess**. You are asked only to share how something works. You are not asked to provide the positives and negatives, i.e., whether something is good or bad. |

**Find**

| | |
|---|---|
| What it means: | Look for something |
| A typical question: | *In our Workplace Health and Safety Policy, find two responsibilities that are relevant to all staff.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Not providing a source of where you found something, e.g., Internet URL address, or a reference to a book. |

**Identify**

| What it means: | Give the name of … |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Identify the names of stakeholders we need to keep informed about the status of this project.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Don't provide a judgment of whether something is good or bad. |

**Illustrate**

| What it means: | Show how the thing you are discussing is a good example of something else. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Illustrate why we need a Probity officer on this tender, to demonstrate Procurement prioritises fairness of process.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | Yes. Provide one or more examples to support positive and negative factors. This gives your response credibility. |
| Common mistakes people make: | In the art sense, illustrate means "draw". In the business sense, it does not mean to draw an image. |

**Justify**

| What it means: | Give a list of reasons to support, or not support, a decision. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Justify the reason for selecting exemption from competitive tender, as your procurement strategy.* |
| Short or long answer: | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Giving background information. You are asked only to provide reasons to support or not support a decision. |

**Order**

| What it means: | Create a list. Arrange the items in the way asked by the question, e.g., largest to smallest. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Order the deliverables for this contract as a critical path.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Arranging the list in the wrong order.<br><br>Giving background information, which is not required. |

## Provide

| What it means: | Give. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Provide one example of maintaining probity during a tender process.* |

## Qualify

| What it means: | After stating something in a strong way, adding some explanation to soften the harshness of what you said. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *In stating your decision, qualify your reasoning.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | Not necessary. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Providing too much explanation, which looks like apologising for what you said. |

## Quote

| What it means: | Meaning 1: Provide the exact words and the identity of the person who wrote those words.<br><br>Meaning 2: Provide a price. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Quote the specific legislation clauses you believe align with our policy, section 1, item a.* |

|  | Provide a competitive quote to meet the requirements in our Request for Tender. |
|---|---|
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Both for Meaning 1:<br><br>Not providing a source of where you found the quote, e.g., an Internet URL address, or a reference to a book.<br><br>Incorrectly stating the quote wording. |

## Reflect

| What it means: | Give thought to something and then provide your opinion. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Reflect on the unsuccessful supplier debriefing, and provide suggestions on how we could improve our approach.* |
| Short or long answer: | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | Yes. Provide one or more examples to support positive and negative factors. Gives your response credibility. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Giving your opinion where the opinion appears to be rushed (i.e., |

| | not well thought through, with visibly unresolved factors). |
|---|---|

## Review

| What it means: | Identical to **Assess**. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Review the Statement of Work to determine if we have comprehensively addressed our needs.* |

## Select

| What it means: | Choose. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Select the Procurement jobs you believe have least followed process.* |

## Specify

| What it means: | Write something exact. |
|---|---|
| A typical question: | *Specify the places in a tender process where evaluators provide a conflict-of-interest declaration.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Rambling text. Get to the point. |

**State**

| What it means: | Express something simply and clearly. |
| --- | --- |
| A typical question: | *State the reasons for the delay in the project.* |
| Short or long answer: | Short. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | No. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Giving a lengthy answer, which suggests they haven't properly read the question. |

**Suggest**

| What it means: | Give your opinion, and briefly explain the reasons why you have decided on that opinion. |
| --- | --- |
| A typical question: | *Suggest reasons why the project is late.* |
| Short or long answer: | Long. |
| Should I give examples that support my identification? | Yes. Provide one or more examples to support positive and negative factors. This gives your response credibility. |
| Common mistakes people make: | Giving your opinion. But not explaining why you have decided on the opinion. |