

Clue Words to Look for in Test Questions

Teacher Suggestions: *Distribute entire list as a study handout. Cut into strips and give to students for individual or group work/study. Following this model, ask students to write their own test questions and answers in their respective content areas. Have students conduct word hunts and find examples in newspaper or other forms of print. Create class thesaurus using these words and post in classroom. Discuss how these words are used in all content areas. Many of these words lend themselves to using graphic organizers – especially the Venn diagram.*

Question Clue Word: analyze

PASS Q: “**Analyze** the information contained in the following document...”

Hint: When you **analyze** something, you look at it very closely; you **look at all the parts or ideas and explain how they are related.**

Question Clue Word: categorize

PASS Q: “**Categorize** the following items using common characteristics.”

Hint: When you **categorize** something, you group, **classify** and/or **sort items**, with **common** or **similar** characteristics.

Question Clue Word: compare

PASS Q: “**Compare** life in the United States with life in Great Britain during the Revolutionary War.”

Hint: When you **compare** things, you look at them very closely and **find all the similarities** between them.

Question Clue Word: contrast

PASS Q: “**Contrast** life in the United States with life in Great Britain during the Revolutionary War.”

Hint: When you **contrast** things, you look at them very closely and **find all the differences** between them.

Question Clue Word: debate

PASS Q: “How did the author **debate** his stance on the issue?”

Hint: When you **debate** something, you **research the topic, analyze both sides and viewpoints** closely and then select whether you are **for or against the topic**. **Evidence to support** your position must be provided.

Question Clue Word: describe

PASS Q: “Using the documents attached, **describe** the importance of ...”

Hint: When you **describe** something, you really work hard to **paint a picture with words** so that your reader can really see what you are saying.

Question Clue Word: differentiate

PASS Q: “The author used the following statements to **differentiate** life in the New World versus life in England. “

Hint: When you **differentiate**, you look very closely at the information and determine all **characteristics** which **set them apart and illustrate the differences**.

Question Clue Word: discuss

PASS Q: “**Discuss** the importance of the Erie Canal during New York State’s early history.”

Hint: When you **discuss** something, you look at it very closely and **examine the subject in detail**.

Question Clue Word: distinguish

PASS Q: “**Distinguish** if the following statements are based on fact or the author’s opinion on the subject.”

Hint: When you **distinguish** between two or more items, you are able to identify **similarities and differences** by **analyzing** the **characteristics** of each.

Question Clue Word: explain

PASS Q: “**Explain** how Native Americans used natural resources to...”

Hint: When you **explain** something, you **give reasons** why things happened or how you got your answer.

Question Clue Word: infer

PASS Q: After reading the newspaper headline, what can you **infer** about the article?”

Hint: When you are asked to make an **inference or to infer the meaning of something**, you are really **drawing a conclusion** using the information provided.

Question Clue Word: interpret

PASS Q: “**Interpret** the meaning of the following dates located on the graph...”

Hint: When you **interpret** something, you look at it very closely, and then **give the underlying meaning or significance of it**.

Question Clue Word: list

PASS Q: “**List** the events that led to the creation of the Declaration of Independence...”

Hint: When you **list** something, you look at it very closely and then you **provide all of the details or all of the steps in order** about that event or thing.

Question Clue Word: main idea

PASS Q: “What is the **main idea** of the story?”

Hint: When you look at the **main idea** (or the main reason for something happening), you are looking for a **BIG idea/reason or the central part** of the information.

Question Clue Word: summarize

PASS Q: “**Summarize** the events leading up to the creation of the Bill of Rights.”

Hint: When you give a **summary or summarize** something, you are giving a **brief description of the main event or main points**. You do not use a lot of details.

Question Clue Word: supporting details

PASS Q: “Which choice identifies the **supporting details** of the passage?”

Hint: When you are asked to **identify the supporting details**, you are **locating statement(s) or sentence(s)** which support the **BIG IDEA or MAIN IDEA** of the paragraph, essay and/or passage.

Question Clue Word: validity

PASS Q: “Which statement illustrates the **validity** of the company’s claim?”

Hint: When you are asked to **show the validity (or to validate something)**, you are providing **evidence based on research and/or evaluation of the information in order to justify the claim, outcome or end result.**

Question Clue Word: viewpoint or point of view

PASS Q: “Which statement best describes the author’s **point of view**?”

Hint: When you determine the **point of view** or **viewpoint** of a story, speech, essay, editorial, debate, paragraph, article or other writing format, you are able to identify the attitudes, thoughts and opinions of the author or narrator.