

Glossary of cognitive verbs

General syllabuses

January 2018

Glossary of cognitive verbs

Term	Explanation
A	
analyse	dissect to ascertain and examine constituent parts and/or their relationships; break down or examine in order to identify the essential elements, features, components or structure; determine the logic and reasonableness of information; examine or consider something in order to explain and interpret it, for the purpose of finding meaning or relationships and identifying patterns, similarities and differences
apply	use knowledge and understanding in response to a given situation or circumstance; carry out or use a procedure in a given or particular situation
appraise	evaluate the worth, significance or status of something; judge or consider a text or piece of work
appreciate	recognise or make a judgment about the value or worth of something; understand fully; grasp the full implications of
argue	give reasons for or against something; challenge or debate an issue or idea; persuade, prove or try to prove by giving reasons
assess	measure, determine, evaluate, estimate or make a judgment about the value, quality, outcomes, results, size, significance, nature or extent of something
C	
calculate	determine or find (e.g. a number, answer) by using mathematical processes; obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working; ascertain/determine from given facts, figures or information
categorise	place in or assign to a particular class or group; arrange or order by classes or categories; classify, sort out, sort, separate
clarify	make clear or intelligible; explain; make a statement or situation less confused and more comprehensible
classify	arrange, distribute or order in classes or categories according to shared qualities or characteristics
comment	express an opinion, observation or reaction in speech or writing; give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation
communicate	convey knowledge and/or understandings to others; make known; transmit
compare	display recognition of similarities and differences and recognise the significance of these similarities and differences
comprehend	understand the meaning or nature of; grasp mentally
conduct	direct in action or course; manage; organise; carry out
consider	think deliberately or carefully about something, typically before making a decision; take something into account when making a judgment; view attentively or scrutinise; reflect on

Term	Explanation
construct	create or put together (e.g. an argument) by arranging ideas or items; display information in a diagrammatic or logical form; make; build
contrast	display recognition of differences by deliberate juxtaposition of contrary elements; show how things are different or opposite; give an account of the differences between two or more items or situations, referring to both or all of them throughout
create	bring something into being or existence; produce or evolve from one's own thought or imagination; reorganise or put elements together into a new pattern or structure or to form a coherent or functional whole
critique	review (e.g. a theory, practice, performance) in a detailed, analytical and critical way
D	
decide	reach a resolution as a result of consideration; make a choice from a number of alternatives
deduce	reach a conclusion that is necessarily true, provided a given set of assumptions is true; arrive at, reach or draw a logical conclusion from reasoning and the information given
define	give the meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity; state meaning and identify or describe qualities
demonstrate	prove or make clear by argument, reasoning or evidence, illustrating with practical example; show by example; give a practical exhibition
derive	arrive at by reasoning; manipulate a mathematical relationship to give a new equation or relationship; in mathematics, obtain the derivative of a function
describe	give an account (written or spoken) of a situation, event, pattern or process, or of the characteristics or features of something
design	produce a plan, simulation, model or similar; plan, form or conceive in the mind; in English, select, organise and use particular elements in the process of text construction for particular purposes; these elements may be linguistic (words), visual (images), audio (sounds), gestural (body language), spatial (arrangement on the page or screen) and multimodal (a combination of more than one)
determine	establish, conclude or ascertain after consideration, observation, investigation or calculation; decide or come to a resolution
develop	elaborate, expand or enlarge in detail; add detail and fullness to; cause to become more complex or intricate
devise	think out; plan; contrive; invent
differentiate	identify the difference/s in or between two or more things; distinguish, discriminate; recognise or ascertain what makes something distinct from similar things; in mathematics, obtain the derivative of a function
discriminate	note, observe or recognise a difference; make or constitute a distinction in or between; differentiate; note or distinguish as different

Term	Explanation
discuss	examine by argument; sift the considerations for and against; debate; talk or write about a topic, including a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses; consider, taking into account different issues and ideas, points for and/or against, and supporting opinions or conclusions with evidence
distinguish	recognise as distinct or different; note points of difference between; discriminate; discern; make clear a difference/s between two or more concepts or items
document	support (e.g. an assertion, claim, statement) with evidence (e.g. decisive information, written references, citations)
E	
evaluate	make an appraisal by weighing up or assessing strengths, implications and limitations; make judgments about ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to selected criteria; examine and determine the merit, value or significance of something, based on criteria
examine	investigate, inspect or scrutinise; inquire or search into; consider or discuss an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue
execute	apply a procedure to familiar task; perform a procedure without significant error, but not necessarily understanding how and why the procedure works; produce in accordance with a plan or design; put into effect, e.g. a plan, order or course of action
experiment	try out or test new ideas or methods, especially in order to discover or prove something; undertake or perform a scientific procedure to test a hypothesis, make a discovery or demonstrate a known fact
explain	make an idea or situation plain or clear by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts; give an account; provide additional information
explore	look into both closely and broadly; scrutinise; inquire into or discuss something in detail
express	convey, show or communicate (e.g. a thought, opinion, feeling, emotion, idea or viewpoint); (in words, art, music or movement) convey or suggest a representation of; depict
extrapolate	infer or estimate by extending or projecting known information; conjecture; infer from what is known; extend the application of something (e.g. a method or conclusion) to an unknown situation by assuming that existing trends will continue or similar methods will be applicable
G	
generate	produce; create; bring into existence
H	
hypothesise	formulate a supposition to account for known facts or observed occurrences; conjecture, theorise, speculate; especially on uncertain or tentative grounds

Term	Explanation
I	
identify	distinguish; locate, recognise and name; establish or indicate who or what someone or something is; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state a distinguishing factor or feature
implement	put something into effect, e.g. a plan or proposal
infer	derive or conclude something from evidence and reasoning, rather than from explicit statements; listen or read beyond what has been literally expressed; imply or hint at
interpret	use knowledge and understanding to recognise trends and draw conclusions from given information; make clear or explicit; elucidate or understand in a particular way; bring out the meaning of, e.g. a dramatic or musical work, by performance or execution; bring out the meaning of an artwork by artistic representation or performance; give one's own interpretation of; identify or draw meaning from, or give meaning to, information presented in various forms, such as words, symbols, pictures or graphs
investigate	carry out an examination or formal inquiry in order to establish or obtain facts and reach new conclusions; search, inquire into, interpret and draw conclusions about data and information
J	
judge	form an opinion or conclusion about; apply both procedural and deliberative operations to make a determination
justify	give reasons or evidence to support an answer, response or conclusion; show or prove how an argument, statement or conclusion is right or reasonable
M	
make decisions	select from available options; weigh up positives and negatives of each option and consider all the alternatives to arrive at a position
manipulate	adapt or change to suit one's purpose
modify	change the form or qualities of; make partial or minor changes to something
O	
organise	arrange, order; form as or into a whole consisting of interdependent or coordinated parts, especially for harmonious or united action
P	
predict	give an expected result of an upcoming action or event; suggest what may happen based on available information
propose	put forward (e.g. a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion) for consideration or action
prove	use a sequence of steps to obtain the required result in a formal way

Term	Explanation
R	
realise	create or make (e.g. a musical, artistic or dramatic work); actualise; make real or concrete; give reality or substance to
recall	remember; present remembered ideas, facts or experiences; bring something back into thought, attention or into one's mind
recognise	identify or recall particular features of information from knowledge; identify that an item, characteristic or quality exists; perceive as existing or true; be aware of or acknowledge
reflect on	think about deeply and carefully
resolve	(in the Arts) consolidate and communicate intent through a synthesis of ideas and application of media to express meaning
S	
select	choose in preference to another or others; pick out
sequence	place in a continuous or connected series; arrange in a particular order
sketch	execute a drawing or painting in simple form, giving essential features but not necessarily with detail or accuracy; in mathematics, represent by means of a diagram or graph; the sketch should give a general idea of the required shape or relationship and should include features
solve	find an answer to, explanation for, or means of dealing with (e.g. a problem); work out the answer or solution to (e.g. a mathematical problem); obtain the answer/s using algebraic, numerical and/or graphical methods
structure	give a pattern, organisation or arrangement to; construct or arrange according to a plan
summarise	give a brief statement of a general theme or major point/s; present ideas and information in fewer words and in sequence
symbolise	represent or identify by a symbol or symbols
synthesise	combine different parts or elements (e.g. information, ideas, components) into a whole, in order to create new understanding
T	
test	take measures to check the quality, performance or reliability of something
U	
understand	perceive what is meant by something; grasp; be familiar with (e.g. an idea); construct meaning from messages, including oral, written and graphic communication
use	operate or put into effect; apply knowledge or rules to put theory into practice