QCAA COGNITIVE VERBS QUEENSLAND

THE VERB IS THE QUESTION

You can write a perfect answer to the wrong verb and score nothing for it.

QCAA defines every cognitive verb in the syllabus glossary, and the marking guide is built on that definition. The verb tells you the level of thinking the question is paying for. Circle it before you write a word.

THREE BANDS, THREE DIFFERENT JOBS

1 RETRIEVAL AND COMPREHENSION

Get what you know onto the page, accurately.

define describe identify recall explain summarise demonstrate execute

2 ANALYTICAL PROCESSES

Take it apart and show what is not obvious.

analyse compare contrast deduce distinguish infer interpret critique

3 KNOWLEDGE UTILISATION

Use it to decide, build, or prove something.

evaluate justify assess argue design propose solve synthesise

THE FIVE PAIRS THAT COST MARKS

QCAA wording on the left. What that actually looks like on your page, on the right.

DESCRIBE Give an account of a feature or event.
EXPLAIN Give the cause, reason, or relationship behind it.

Describe stops at what. Explain has to answer why or how.

EXPLAIN Make it clear by revealing a cause or relationship.
ANALYSE Break it down and reveal what is not obvious.

Explain gives the reason. Analyse pulls the thing apart first.

ANALYSE Break down and reveal what is not obvious.
EVALUATE Judge the value, quality, or significance.

Analyse describes the parts. Evaluate says which part matters most, and why.

EVALUATE Make a judgment about value or quality.
JUSTIFY Show or prove it is right, reasonable, or valid.

Evaluate weighs both sides. Justify commits to one and defends it.

COMPARE Examine similarities and differences.
CONTRAST Examine differences.

Compare needs both. Contrast only needs the differences.

Do this now: go back through your mock paper and circle the verb in every question you dropped marks on.

> Words are events, they do things, change things.
>
> URSULA K. LE GUIN

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