** Planning an Assignment**

**Key Instruction Terms**

Instruction terms are words that can usually be found in essay questions that direct you towards how you need to be answering the question. Some key instruction words are as follows:

* **Account for**: give a clear explanation of something and evaluate (possible) causes/reasons
* **Analyse**: examine the topic by dividing it into parts and looking at each part in detail; form judgements about each element and the whole
* **Argue**: construct a case (a reasoned viewpoint, something that can be argued) in an appropriate order, citing evidence, which may be other people's research, or other kinds of facts/information
* **Assess**: judge the significance of something, referring to the special knowledge of experts wherever possible (i.e. referring to/quoting from other people's work)
* **Comment on**: give your own opinion about something, supported by reasons and evidence
* **Compare**: examine one thing in relation to something else, to emphasise points of difference or similarity
* **Contrast**: explore the differences between two things
* **Critically evaluate**: give your judgements about the good and/or bad qualities of theories/opinions supporting your decisions with reasons and evidence
* **Define**: explain the exact meaning of a word or phrase
* **Describe**: give a full account or detailed representation of something
* **Discuss**: consider something by writing about it from different points of view with supporting evidence
* **Enumerate**: list and mention items separately in number order
* **Evaluate**: calculate the value/effectiveness of a theory/decision/object etc., including your own opinion, and supporting each point with evidence
* **Explain**: give reasons for or account for something, so it is clear/easy to understand
* **Illustrate**: use examples or diagrams to explain something
* **Interpret**: give your own opinion of the significance of something (give reasons/evidence wherever possible)
* **Justify**: give good reasons for decisions or conclusions, perhaps by referring to other texts
* **Outline**: give the main features, facts, or general idea of something, omitting minor details
* **Prove**: show something is accurate/true/valid by using facts, documents and/or other information to build your case
* **Reconcile**: show how apparently conflicting things can appear similar or compatible
* **Relate**: establish how things are connected or associated, how they affect each other or how they are alike
* **Review**: to examine an area and assess it critically
* **Show**: explain something giving evidence or examples to establish a strong case
* **State**: put something clearly and concisely
* **Summarise**: give a brief, concise account of the main points of something (leaving out details)
* **Trace**: follow the cause or stages in development of something