Words and Precise Meanings — Matching Exercise

Transition Words

https://www.transitionword.com/

Fairfax, Virginia

Match each **verb** with its most accurate **meaning**. Then study the **example sentence** to understand its proper use. This sheet is designed for **graduate-level study**.

Compare

Point out similarities and differences between two or more items; may include a conclusion as to the preferred view.

Example: Compare the economic policies of Keynes and Friedman, noting both similarities and differences.

Contrast

Set two views in opposition in order to highlight the differences between them.

Example: Contrast qualitative research methods with quantitative approaches.

Evaluate

Assess the value of something, which might include offering a personal, reasoned judgement.

Example: Evaluate the effectiveness of fiscal policy in reducing unemployment.

Interpret

Explain the meaning of something, often giving reasons for conclusions reached.

Example: Interpret the results of the survey in relation to existing theories.

Justify

Give reasons for decisions or conclusions reached; include evidence and address likely objections.

Example: Justify your choice of research design with reference to methodology literature.

Outline

Give an overview of the general principles and/or main features of a subject, omitting fine detail.

Example: Outline the stages of the policy-making process.

Analyze

Break a topic into component parts and explain how the parts relate to the whole.

Example: Analyze the causes of the financial crisis of 2008.

Define

State the precise meaning of a term or concept, often distinguishing it from related terms.

Example: Define globalization and distinguish it from internationalization.

Describe

Give a detailed, factual account of key characteristics without evaluation.

Example: Describe the demographic profile of the study population.

Discuss

Consider a topic from multiple angles, presenting arguments for and against before reaching a view.

Example: Discuss whether federalism strengthens or weakens democracy.

Explain

Make clear the meaning or mechanism of something, often by giving reasons and examples.

Example: Explain how inflation affects purchasing power.

Summarize

Present the main points concisely, omitting detail and illustration.

Example: Summarize the main arguments of the article in your own words.

Synthesize

Combine insights from multiple sources to produce a coherent, original account.

Example: Synthesize recent literature on climate adaptation strategies.

Critique

Evaluate strengths and weaknesses with reasoned evidence; suggest improvements.

Example: Critique the author's methodology and suggest an alternative approach.

Illustrate

Make something clear by using specific examples, cases, or simple figures.

Example: Illustrate the concept of opportunity cost with a real-life decision.

Differentiate

Show how two or more things are distinct by identifying defining features.

Example: Differentiate between renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

Argue

Present a position and support it with logical reasoning and evidence.

Example: Argue whether social media enhances or undermines civic engagement.

Propose

Put forward a plan or solution, specifying rationale, steps, and potential risks.

Example: Propose a strategy for improving rural healthcare delivery.

Assess

Judge the importance, size, or value of something using clear criteria.

Example: Assess the role of foreign aid in economic development.

Classify

Arrange items into categories according to shared characteristics and justify the categories.

Example: Classify different types of unemployment and explain each briefly.

Graduate Study Tip: Always align your responses with the precise task verb used in assignments. This ensures clarity, rigor, and accurate interpretation of instructions.