

ADDRESSING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

THE QUESTION IS KEY.

- Read and re-read the assignment. Look for the heart of the question, usually signaled by verbs that direct you to do something specific. This language exists to alert you to the very specific requirements of the paper.

HIGHLIGHT VERBS.

- These verbs are signals to you as to what you should be doing. Words such as: describe, argue, define, explain, explore summarize, compare and contrast, criticize. Each of these words implies a different task.

PARAPHRASE THE ASSIGNMENT.

- Rewriting the assignment in your own words can help you make sense of an assignment. If you can correctly paraphrase any text, that is a reflection of comprehension.

MAKE AN OUTLINE OF THE ASSIGNMENT.

- Some assignments will provide you with a suggested structure for your paper. Making an outline of these directives can help you organize your ideas.

VISIT THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CENTER.

- A learning specialist or peer tutor can offer strategies for making sense of an assignment question.

THINK OF THE ASSIGNMENT AS A MAP.

- Would you look at a map only once if you were driving from Boston to California? Probably not. Refer to your assignment again and again as you draft your paper. Use it to check that you are indeed on the right road.

INCORPORATE THE LANGUAGE OF THE QUESTION IN TO YOUR PAPER.

- Using the key words of an assignment question in your paper can help get you on the right road.