

11 QUESTION KEYWORDS EXPLAINED FOR UPSC MAINS

LASTODAY

<u>Keywords</u>	<u>Meaning/How to approach</u>
1. Discuss	This is one of the most common question words in upsc mains examination. Question demands discussion on that topic with decent introduction; Body and proper conclusion. Essentially it could be a written debate substantiating advantages & disadvantages with evidences and examples.
IASTODAY TIP: There should be apprehensions / limitations even if demanded significances or benefits only. There is scope for way forward suggestions if there is demand for challenges explicitly in question.	
2. Comment	As it suggests you are supposed to comment. It doesn't requires accurate facts /definitions. Just comment on the biased/unbiased statement given in a neutral manner. Don't limit your comments as you comment in Facebook. It needs a proper transition from beginning to end with a view point of your own.
IASTODAY TIP: If a question seems to ask positive answer, then give a positive answer. If it seems to be negative approach, carefully approach the question to give a negative writing without challenging ideologies or ideas against Constitution / govt policy.	
3. Critically comment	This is also a comment but you should be critical. Even if the statement is positive; You are supposed to mention negatives. Ideally you should cover pros & cons with a middle stand conclusion. Never conclude with a side view.
IASTODAY TIP: Don't go much critical to a community or constitutional provisions or government policies.	
4. Examine	Assume the examiner knows the issue, but he wants you to dig the issue deeply and bring out other perspectives to light. Here the examiner is looking for unique points other than the normal.
IASTODAY TIP: Look in close detail and establish the key facts and important issues surrounding a topic & its implications before concluding your findings.	
5. Critically examine	Even though the question word itself has a negative tone, you have to examine positive aspects and explain them as well. Critically is usually added to the directive when the topic is controversial or issues related to it clearly have both positives and negatives .
IASTODAY TIP : You are supposed to cover both sides in a balanced manner with moderate way forward suggestions at end.	
6. Define	This needs pretty more accuracy. Give precise definition or meaning of something.
IASTODAY TIP : Focus more on exact problem or different interpretations if any. Eg: Define global warming.	

Meaning: Key Words for UPSC MAINS papers explained for framing answer accordingly!!

7.How far do you agree	This is not a common question word, still its seen in recent papers. In similar ones, you should cover both side arguments with an extra hit for the one you prefer to agree /conclude.
IASTODAY TIP: General introduction is recommended, body should cover arguments around the issues with range of agreement / disagreement at conclusion based on the merit of content covered.	
8. Do you agree/ Do you think? Justify	This is a common type where your opinion & its justification is expected. Express opinion first with clarity, then an overview followed by justification arguments with clarity. Conclusion in line with opinion is recommended.
IASTODAY TIP: You are free to say YES or NO , what matters for is justification for your opinion. It's recommended to stay in line with government policies and actions as an aspiring civil servant.	
9. Explain	This question may be familiar to all as everywhere we gets this question. Explain why you are late. Explain in detail as possible. You need to explain in simple words with clarity as its understandable to all. You dont need to express your expertise in this topic. Eg: How & why it occurs, What is its relevance in the particular context. You can also use examples if necessary.
10. Illustrate	This is somewhat similar to explain but you need to illustrate working of something with suitable diagrams /flow charts/Block diagrams. You can use detailed statistics and examples to substantiate your explanations.
11. Compare	You will be normally asked to compare A and B. So you need to point out similarities and differences. It doesn't needs detailed introduction and conclusion. Just compare point by point or in parallel. Eg: compare code of ethics and code of conduct.
IASTODAY TIP: Comparison would be impressive if you manage using 2 column formats with enhanced clarity for aspects compared.	

These are general approach for the most repeated question words. Understanding these terms well is enough for a good approach. Note that it's not a common rule for all cases. **There are exceptions which will be explained in daily writing feedbacks eventually.** Join our [daily writing series with official review since 2016 with best in class feedbacks .](#)

Queries? Shoot a mail to Care@iastoday.in