

UPSC

MAINS 2023

ANSWER WRITING KEY WORDS

NOTES

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Answer writing keywords:

- Discuss:** This is the most frequently asked term in the paper, and perhaps the easiest to understand and write on. It simply means to write whatever one knows about the topic. Different opinions can be incorporated into this keyword. Depending on the question, an aspirant can resort to an explanation of the topic, can present pros and cons of the topic etc. The most important aspect of this keyword is to write as if you are having a discussion with someone.
For e.g., 'The RTI Act is not all about citizen empowerment alone, it essentially redefines the concept of accountability.' Discuss.
- Evaluate/Assess/Examine:** It essentially means to give a detailed explanation on the topic given. One should weigh both sides of the argument in these types of questions and present a balanced view of the topic given. In the conclusion, one should take a positive outlook.
For e.g., Whether the Supreme Court judgement (July 2018) can settle the political; tussle between the Lt. governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine.
- Critically examine/assess/evaluate:** Whenever the term 'critically' is used in the question, it essentially means to weigh both the positive and negative outcomes of a question and present a balanced view of the topic given. One should be able to support and also repudiate a statement: it essentially means to have a debate with oneself.
A common mistake made in this type of question is that aspirants generally just give the pros and not the cons, thus leaving the answer incomplete. It is necessary to present both viewpoints in these types of questions. It is also necessary to present a fair judgement of the topic in the conclusion.
For e.g., The interlinking of rivers can provide viable solutions to the multi-dimensional inter-related problems of droughts, floods and interrupted navigation. Critically examine.
- Analyse:** This keyword does not differ much from evaluate/assess/examine. Here too, one must look into different aspects of the topic and conclude by addressing the central idea of the topic. Generally, one can break the question into its constituent keywords and then present the views about the question. However, looking into different angles of the topic is necessary.
For e.g. The North – East region of India has been infested with insurgency for a very long time. Analyse the major reasons for the survival of Armed insurgency in this region.
- Explain/Elaborate/Comment:** This keyword is the easiest to understand and write answers on. It simply means to properly expand on the topic and the question given. There is no need to present pros and cons in this type of questions, just one view would suffice. Generally, these questions are straightforward, with limited to no subparts to the question.
For e.g., From the resolution of contentious issues regarding distribution of legislative powers of the courts, 'Principle of federal Supremacy' and 'Harmonious Construction' have emerged. Explain.
- Elucidate:** To elucidate is to take a topic that was not clear before and make it clear. In these types of questions, using data and facts are absolutely necessary. The introduction should properly define the topic given t=in the question, the body should explain it and the conclusion should summarise all the points given so that the examiner cannot point out that you were not able to explain the topic.

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For e.g., The Self-Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP), which is India's own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective Poverty alleviation and women empowerment programme. Elucidate.

7. **Substantiate:** Essentially, give data/facts/examples in support of the statement given. Generally, these questions will be such that one cannot present the counterview of the topic given. Giving examples is absolutely necessary in this type of questions- generally, it is mentioned that you should give examples in the question itself.

For e.g., "The growth of cities as I.T. hubs have opened up new avenues of employment, but has also created new problems." Substantiate this statement with examples.

8. **Justify:** This keyword essentially means you have to support the statement given in the question. In these types of questions, the examiner already has taken a particular stand, and is not asking for your view, he is simply asking you to justify the stand that he has already taken in the question. One does not have to give counterarguments in these questions, just supporting data or examples are enough. In another type of questions, the question will ask your opinion on a topic, and then ask you to justify your stand.

For e.g., Do you think India will meet 50% of its energy needs from renewable energy by 2030? Justify your answer.