



Method Kit:

How to structure essays with other task descriptors

Before you start drafting an essay, it is always a good idea to know what exactly you are supposed to do. Here is some advice on how to deal with less frequent task descriptors:

task descriptor	What does the 'Servicepaket 2018' say? ¹	What exactly does that mean? ²
analyse / examine	"break down a problem into separate factors, then draw a conclusion based on your break-down"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find the important factors or statements in your text.• Work out how they create the meaning/message of the text.• Relate these elements to one another (as determined by your task) and condense them into a clear message.• Draw a conclusion (i.e. sum up the result of your analysis).
compare / contrast	"tell how things are alike and / or different, use concrete examples"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find useful criteria for comparing the two texts.• Using these criteria, show similarities and differences.• Draw a conclusion which sums up your findings.
assess / evaluate	"give a carefully considered opinion, include all the important aspects of a question"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find useful criteria for judging your text.• Apply these criteria to the statements made in your text.• Give judgement on whether/how much your text meets these criteria.• Draw a conclusion which sums up your findings.

¹ <https://km-bw.de/site/pbs-bw-new/get/documents/KULTUS.Dachmandant/KULTUS/KM-Homepage/Artikelseiten%20KP-KM/Schularten/Gymnasium/Servicepaket%20Stand%20November%202018.pdf>

² based on RPS/RPT/RPK/RPF paper "Operatoren in der schriftlichen Abiturprüfung Englisch, Teil II Textproduktion", 2018 (unpublished)

interpret a picture, cartoon, diagram...	"explain the meaning or purpose of something"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your picture, cartoon etc., but limit yourself to the important parts only! ('Important' means these parts contribute to the message of the picture, cartoon etc.). • Explain how these details put together create the message of your picture, cartoon etc. • Bring in your background knowledge to explain the message. • Sum up your interpretation in a short conclusion.
interpret a quote	"explain the meaning or purpose of something"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse your quote, but limit yourself to the important parts only! ('Important' means these parts contribute to the message of the quote). • Explain how these details put together create the message of your quote. • Bring in your background knowledge to explain the message. • Sum up your interpretation in a short conclusion.

Please note: The term "text" used in this compilation refers to both continuous (i.e. texts with sentences, paragraphs etc.) and non-continuous texts (i.e. cartoons, pictures, graphs etc.)!

Be careful:

- Sometimes task descriptors like "analyse" are combined with a second task, e.g. "Analyse the cartoon and comment on its message". In that case, simply add the paragraphs with your opinion (=thesis) and your arguments before you draw your conclusion (= last paragraph). See our [structure charts](#) for details.
- You **ALWAYS** need an introduction! And sorry, "*The cartoon x by xy was published on...*" doesn't qualify as an introduction! Please refer to our [introductions page](#) for inspiration.