

Performance Verbs

THIS VERB . . .	MEANS YOU SHOULD . . .
analyze	study the different parts that make up a conflict, situation, character, or other idea. Your goal is to understand the whole by studying the relationship of the parts. <i>Analyze the symbol of the raven in Poe's poem "The Raven."</i>
compare	look at the ways two or more things are alike and/or different. <i>Compare Sherlock Holmes's and Dr. Watson's opinions of Irene Adler.</i>
describe	tell details about an idea, character, point of view, or other concept in order to create a mental picture for your reader. <i>Use an example from the poem to describe the effect Keats creates by using personification.</i>
evaluate	decide the value or significance of something. Examples are identifying advantages and disadvantages of a concept, giving an opinion of an idea, and stating the pros and cons of an idea or action. <i>Evaluate Tom Sawyer's plan to get the fence whitewashed.</i>
explain	make an idea clear using your own words. Examples are describing causes, effects, or relationships; or identifying steps in a process. <i>Give two examples of figurative language and explain how each affects the story.</i>
formulate	put together a statement based on your study of the given information. <i>Formulate a policy on cell phones in the classroom. Use information from the article to support your answer.</i>
infer	deduce or guess information that is not stated by studying what is stated. You "connect the dots" or "read between the lines." <i>In the excerpt from Hatchet, you can infer that Brian learns what about self-pity?</i>
predict	decide what is most likely to happen later based on a study of information given you. Note: Watch for phrases such as "in the future" or "next" that may be used instead of "predict." <i>How is the zookeeper most likely to treat the elephant in the future? Use information from the article to support your answer.</i>
summarize	briefly tell the main ideas or points of a passage or idea. <i>Summarize the argument in favor of big business in small towns.</i>
support	give evidence (such as details from the passage) to show that your idea is valid (right). <i>Why did Charlotte write TERRIFIC in her web? Use a detail from the excerpt to support your answer.</i>
trace	identify the points in a sequence or path. <i>Trace the history of hazing at Lincoln High School.</i>
