

## Analysing questions - taken from Study Skills Clifton Press 1999-2000

### Read carefully

- Read any essay or exam question **very** carefully.
- Try to understand the problem it is posing.
- Note any of its [key terms](#) and [instruction terms](#).
- Identify [the main issue](#) or concept behind it.

### Write out the question

- Write out the question fully and accurately on your rough notes and your [drafts](#), for the essay.
- This will help you to understand what is required.
- Keep re-reading the question as you work on your [essay](#) or [project](#).
- Write out the question in full on your final essay too.

### Special terms

- Most questions contain [key terms](#) and [instruction terms](#).
- These might sometimes be implied rather than directly stated.  

'Examine the significance of Iago's role in *Othello*'
- **'Examine'** here is an [instruction term](#).
- It is telling you to discuss the topic in a general manner.
- **'Iago's role'** is a [key term](#).
- It tells you to focus on this particular aspect of the play.
- It is also setting a limit to the question.
- [Key terms](#) are determined by the subject in question.
- [Instruction terms](#) are conventions which tell you how to approach the question.

## Common problems

● Most [common problems](#) are caused by not reading the question carefully.

● This often results in -

- answering the wrong question
- misunderstanding the point
- failing to see the emphasis
- not following the instructions

## General

● Questions are not set to catch you out or to be especially difficult.

● They give you the chance to show what you have learned on the course.

● It's true that some may be expressed in an oblique manner.

● Your task may then be to 'interpret' the question.

● If a question is **very** obscure or ambiguous, ask your tutor for advice.