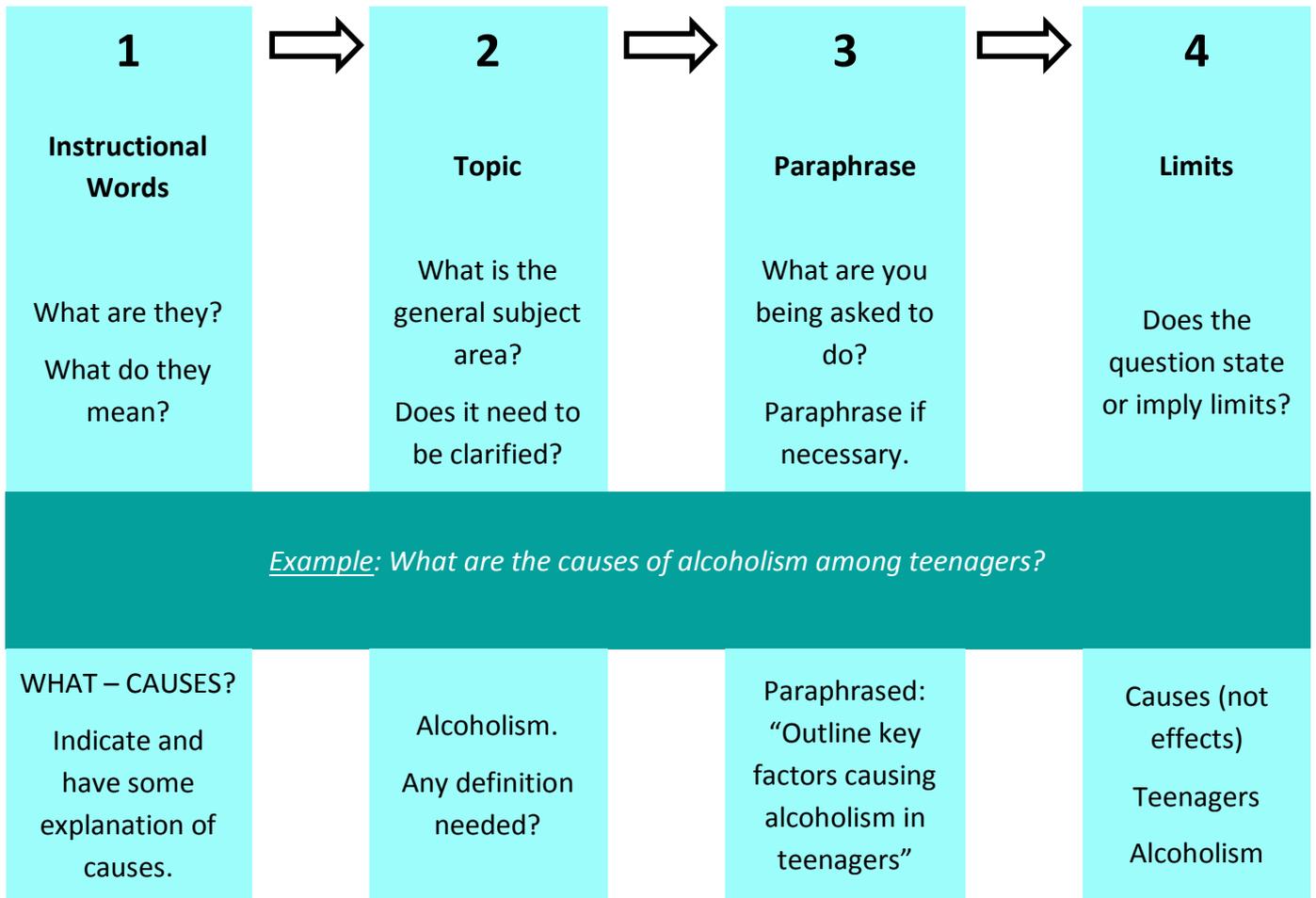




ANALYSING THE QUESTION

This is a crucial and first step as it sets the parameters for your essay or assignment and gives you direction to get you started. Here is a **Four Step Approach** you could use:



Here are some questions for you to try;

1. Briefly discuss the opportunities and threats which globalisation poses for the economy over the coming decade. (1500 words)
2. Identify and justify four ways in which an understanding of human development and behaviour will assist lecturers when working with students in their lectures. (1000 words)
3. ‘Passive smoking is harmful’. Discuss. (1000 words)

Think about these aspects when analysing the question

Instructional Words

It is important to recognise and understand the instructional word(s).
See SLSS handout on *Instructional Words* for more information.



Related resources:
Instructional Words
Structure of an Essay

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- **Changing the instructional word can change the meaning**

- e.g. a) Outline the early history of the Trade Union Movement.
b) Why did the Trade Union Movement develop?

a) is descriptive, whereas b) requires reasons and evidence.

- **Some words can mean many things**

e.g. “Discuss” and “Explain”

Look at the context of the instructional word in the whole question and at any other clues in assignment information. Ask if in doubt.

- **Sometimes the instructional word is inappropriate or adds doubt to the question. Ask your lecturer or tutor for clarification.**

Short Questions The magnetic attraction of short questions often hides some real difficulties.

e.g. Discuss ritual healing.

This creates enormous possibilities as it has hardly any limits. To handle this well you need to create your own limits. e.g.

- defining ritual healing for your purpose.
- limiting your examples to one kind of ritual healing from one society.

Long Questions Some departments develop ½ to 1 page long questions. How do you tackle them?

Take the question apart, treat each part as a separate question and tackle it using the same process.

Opinion When do you give it – when don't you?
Recognising when an opinion is called for.

Using the term “comment” usually invites opinion as does “do you agree...”

Pitfalls It is a good idea to anticipate the pitfalls BEFORE you start.

Work out how the question could be misinterpreted.



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