

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Key Words in Writing Prompts

| Signal Word   | Task  |
|---------------|---|
| analyze       | break the topic down into its parts; show causes and effects                |
| compare       | show how two or more things are alike                                       |
| contrast      | show how two or more things are different                                   |
| defend        | support an argument or position with facts, reasons, examples               |
| define        | state the meaning of a term; describe the basic nature of something         |
| describe      | tell what something is like; illustrate something in words                  |
| develop       | create something (such as a plan); expand or enlarge something              |
| discuss       | examine or make observations about a subject; present a subject in detail   |
| evaluate      | judge the significance, condition, or value of a subject, event, or object  |
| examine       | observe carefully; study or analyze in detail                               |
| explain       | make an event, problem, or relationship clear and understandable            |
| explore       | conduct a careful examination of a subject; investigate all possibilities   |
| identify      | describe something that fits the characteristics indicated in the prompt.   |
| interpret     | explain the meaning or significance of a subject; offer an explanation      |
| justify       | show that a position is right or reasonable with facts, reasoning, examples |
| outline       | provide a general description covering the main points of a subject         |
| pros and cons | arguments in favor of (pros) and opposed to (cons) a position or action     |
| show          | demonstrate or explain by reasoning or step-by-step procedures              |
| state         | show, explain, or express in words  |
| summarize     | give a condensed description of an issue, event, or sequence of events      |
| support       | provide evidence for; show to be true with facts, reasons, examples         |
| take a stand  | state a position or an opinion you are prepared to support and uphold       |
| tell          | give a detailed account of an event, sequence of event, or situation        |
| trace         | describe a train of events; follow the development or progress of a subject |