

AP ESSAY WORDS

VERBS

Practice using a variety of verbs to phrase “said” or “show” or “symbolize” in different ways in order to avoid monotony and generalization in your writing. Avoid “symbolize” in particular because students so often write “x symbolizes y” and then neglect to explain or provide evidence to support that assumption.

Many of these other words suggest the same concept as “x symbolizes y” (which is close-ended and can mislead the writer to think she has finished with the idea) but are more open-ended and lead the writer into connecting to supporting evidence. This collection of words came from student essays.

signify	epitomize	illustrate	demonstrate
relays	suggest	imply	infer
develop	allude	reveal	discover
characterize	describe	reflect	use
evoke	view	enable	transmit
introduce	convey	establish	magnify
detail	portend	foreshadow	reiterate
minimize	maximize	identify	correlate
parallels	corroborate	refer	strengthen
writes	continues	points	stems
contributes	cause	affects	effect
testifies	verifies	certifies	vouch
affirms	deters	presents	marks
entails	explains	traces	leads
support	legitimize	deny	defy
define	enforces	enhance	reinforce
adds	detract	resembles	contradict
validates	invalidates	hint	create
dismiss	justify	translate	indicates
proposes	mislead	guide	addresses
reaffirms	states	specify	complement
render	comprehend	link	communicate
paints	builds	balances	ascertain
tint	understand	envelops	evolves
simplify	complicate	juxtapose	combines
connect	expresses	involves	diminish

Add additional verbs when you see them in other essays or when you think of them:

Do NOT use the following indefinite words that lead writers into lack of specificity:
it this these. there. that. something, someone, says, tells, seem.