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TEST TERMS FOR SUCCESS

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The following words appear routinely on standardized tests from elementary through high school. Teach and use the following words during instruction, classroom activities, homework assignments, and quizzes across all subject areas when applicable. Some of their synonyms appear in parentheses.

FIVE W'S

– Answer who, what, when, where, and why questions about a passage.

DESCRIBE

–Write a response to help the reader visualize a clear picture of a person, place, thing, or idea –including details of color, shape, size, texture, taste, odor, or emotions – including any other unusual features and characteristics.(characterize, demonstrate, illustrate, recount, exhibit, show, suggest, draft, outline)

EXPLAIN

–Write a response telling how to do something or how/why something happened or will happen. (clarify, demonstrate, illustrate)

COMPARE

– Write a response as to how two or more things are the same. (equate, liken, associate, connect, couple, relate, match, parallel)

CONTRAST

– Write a response as to how two or more things are different.

DEFINE

– Present a clear meaning and understanding of a term or event.

INFER

– “Read between the lines” of a passage/statement and use the author’s clues to write an interpretation of what the author is really trying to say. The answer is not in the passage. (conclude, deduce, judge, reason, understand)

TRACE

–List the steps leading to a certain event or result. (outline, follow)

SUMMARIZE

– Write a short version of a longer text and include only the most important details and/or events. (outline, recap, sum up, wrap up)

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ANALYZE

- Students break apart an item, document, or an event in order to comment and explain the nature and relationship of its parts. (assess, evaluate, examine, inspect, investigate, arrange, categorize, classify, sort, break down, dissect)

FORMULATE

- Students express a formula (math) or state the necessary steps in order to create a plan. (cast, draft, draw (up), prepare)

GENERALIZE

- State in a more general form and infer from the facts.

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

- Determine the author's reason behind his/her writing – to inform, entertain, or persuade.

PERSUADE

- Take a stand and defend one side of an issue by giving facts, beliefs, opinions, and personal viewpoints. (argue, convince, satisfy, talk into, win over)

DEMONSTRATE

- Write and/or illustrate step-by-step procedures that tell or show how to do something. (establish, show, make known)

INTERPRET

- Students write their understanding of a passage using the information they have (sometime supported by their own experiences). (explain, make plain)

ESTIMATE

- Conclude, determine, or judge the approximate value, size, or cost of something based on personal experience or observation rather than an actual measurement. (appraise, assess, evaluate, reckon)

SEQUENCE

- Arrange and write events or the steps of a process in order from beginning to end.

INTERPRET

- Explain in more understandable terms.