

COMMAND WORDS

Appendix 5: Command word taxonomy

The following table lists the command words used in the external assessments.

| Command word | Definition |
|-----------------------|--|
| Add/Label | Requires the addition or labelling of a stimulus material given in the question, for example labelling a diagram or adding units to a table. |
| Calculate | Obtain a numerical answer, showing relevant working. |
| Comment on | Requires the synthesis of a number of variables from data/information to form a judgement. |
| Complete | Requires the completion of a table/diagram. |
| Deduce | Draw/reach conclusion(s) from the information provided. |
| Describe | To give an account of something. Statements in the response need to be developed, as they are often linked but do not need to include a justification or reason. |
| Determine | The answer must have an element that is quantitative from the stimulus provided, or must show how the answer can be reached quantitatively. To gain maximum marks, there must be a quantitative element to the answer. |
| Design | Plan or invent a procedure from existing principles/ideas. |
| Discuss | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the issue/situation/problem/argument that is being assessed within the question.• Explore all aspects of an issue/situation/problem/argument.• Investigate the issue/situation etc. by reasoning or argument. |
| Draw | Produce a diagram either using a ruler or freehand. |
| Estimate | Find an approximate value, number or quantity from a diagram/given data or through a calculation. |
| Evaluate | Review information (e.g. data, methods) then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's quality and relate it to its context. |
| Explain | An explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point. The answer must contain some element of reasoning/justification – this can include mathematical explanations. |
| Give/State/Name | All of these command words are really synonyms. They generally all require recall of one or more pieces of information. |
| Give a reason/reasons | When a statement has been made and the requirement is only to give the reason(s) why. |
| Identify | Usually requires some key information to be selected from a given stimulus/resource. |

| Command word | Definition |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Justify | Give evidence to support (either the statement given in the question or an earlier answer). |
| Plot | Produce a graph by marking points accurately on a grid from data that is provided and then draw a line of best fit through these points. A suitable scale and appropriately labelled axes must be included if these are not provided in the question. |
| Predict | Give an expected result. |
| Show that | Verify the statement given in the question. |
| Sketch | Produce a freehand drawing. For a graph, this would need a line and labelled axes with important features indicated. The axes are not scaled. |
| State what is meant by | When the meaning of a term is expected but there are different ways for how these can be described. |
| Suggest | Use your knowledge to propose a solution to a problem in a novel context. |
| Verb preceding a command word | |
| Analyse the data/graph to explain | Examine the data/graph in detail to provide an explanation. |
| Multiple choice questions | |
| What, Why | Direct command words used for multiple-choice questions. |