

Appendix 5: Command words

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, e.g. 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 this can be described.
Suggest	Use your knowledge to propose a solution to a problem in a novel context.
Verb proceeding 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.