Command words

Command words are the words and phrases used in exams and other assessment tasks that tell students how they should answer the question.

The following command words are taken from Ofqual's official list of command words and their meanings that are relevant to this subject. In addition, where necessary, we have included our own command words and their meanings to complement Ofqual's list.

**Analyse**

Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.

**Apply**

Put into effect in a recognised way.

**Argue**

Present a reasoned case.

**Assess**

Make an informed judgement.

**Comment**

Present an informed opinion.

**Compare**

Identify similarities and/or differences.

**Consider**

Review and respond to given information.

**Contrast**

Identify differences.

**Criticise**

Assess worth against explicit expectations.
Debate
Present different perspectives on an issue.

Define
Specify meaning.

Describe
Set out characteristics.

Discuss
Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.

Evaluate
Judge from available evidence.

Examine
Investigate closely.

Explain
Set out purposes or reasons.

Give
Produce an answer from recall.

Identify
Name or otherwise characterize.

Justify
Support a case with evidence.

Name
Identify using a recognised technical term.

Outline
Set out main characteristics.

Review
Survey information.
State
Express clearly and briefly.

Suggest
Present a possible case/solution.

Summarise
Present principal points without detail.