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.

Calculate
Work out the value of something.

Compare
Identify similarities and or differences.

Complete
Finish a task by adding to given information.

Consider
Review and respond to given information.

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.

Explain
Set out purposes or reasons.

Identify
Name or otherwise characterise.

Illustrate
Present clarifying examples.

Interpret
Translate information into recognisable form.

Justify
Support a case with evidence.

Outline
Set out main characteristics.

Suggest
Present a possible case/solution.

State
Express clearly and briefly.