

Glossary of command terms

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

| Command term | Assessment objective level | Definition |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Analyse | AO2 | Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure. |
| Annotate | AO4 | Add brief notes to a diagram or graph. |
| Apply | AO2 | Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue. |
| Calculate | AO4 | Obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working. |
| Comment | AO2 | Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation. |
| Compare | AO3 | Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout. |
| Compare and contrast | AO3 | Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout. |
| Complete | AO4 | Add missing information/data. |
| Construct | AO4 | Display information in a diagrammatic or logical form. |
| Contrast | AO3 | Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout. |
| Define | AO1 | Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity. |
| Demonstrate | AO2 | Make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application. |
| Describe | AO1 | Give a detailed account. |
| Determine | AO4 | Obtain the only possible answer. |
| Discuss | AO3 | Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence. |
| Distinguish | AO2 | Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items. |
| Draw | AO4 | Represent by means of a labelled, accurate diagram or graph, using a pencil. A ruler (straight edge) should be used for straight lines. Diagrams should be drawn to scale. Graphs should have points correctly plotted (if appropriate) and joined in a straight line or smooth curve. |
| Evaluate | AO3 | Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations. |
| Examine | AO3 | Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue. |

| Command term | Assessment objective level | Definition |
|----------------|----------------------------|--|
| Explain | AO2 | Give a detailed account including reasons or causes. |
| Identify | AO1 | Provide an answer from a number of possibilities. |
| Justify | AO3 | Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion. |
| Label | AO4 | Add labels to a diagram. |
| List | AO1 | Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation. |
| Outline | AO1 | Give a brief account or summary. |
| Plot | AO4 | Mark the position of points on a diagram. |
| Prepare | AO4 | Put given data or information from a stimulus/source into a suitable format. |
| Recommend | AO3 | Present an advisable course of action with appropriate supporting evidence/reason in relation to a given situation, problem or issue. |
| State | AO1 | Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation. |
| Suggest | AO2 | Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer. |
| To what extent | AO3 | Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument. |