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

Identify the elements and investigate in detail in order to explain or interpret.

Comment

Express an opinion and/or response.

Compare

Identify and explain the similarities and differences by placing the points alongside each other and changing the focus from one to the other.

Consider

Think carefully about the idea or statement, taking everything into account when reaching a conclusion.

Define

Give the exact meaning in briefest possible terms.

Describe

Give a detailed account of.

Discuss

Refer to the analysis of the idea or elements and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the parts and the whole.

Evaluate

Judge from available evidence.

Examine

Investigate closely.

Explain

Clarify something by providing more detail and the reason(s) for.

Give

Produce an answer from recall.

Identify

Give the briefest possible information which clearly separates the idea or element from all the other ideas or elements.