

# 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.

## Analyse

Break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.

## Annotate

Add to a diagram, image or graphic a number of words that describe and/or explain features, rather than just identify them (which is labelling).

## Assess

Consider several options or arguments and weigh them up so as to come to a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.

## Calculate

Work out the value of something.

## Critically

Often occurs before 'Assess' or 'Evaluate' inviting an examination of an issue from the point of view of a critic with a particular focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the points of view being expressed.

## Define..., What is meant by...

State the precise meaning of an idea or concept. There is usually a low tariff of marks for this.

## Describe

Give an account in words of a phenomenon which may be an entity, an event, a feature, a pattern, a distribution or a process. For example, if describing a landform say what it looks like, give some indication of size or scale, what it is made of, and where it is in relation to something else (field relationship).

## Discuss

Set out both sides of an argument (for and against), and come to a conclusion related to the content and emphasis of the discussion. There should be some evidence of balance, though not necessarily of equal weighting.

## Evaluate

Consider several options, ideas or arguments and come to a conclusion about their importance/success/worth.

## **Examine**

Consider carefully and provide a detailed account of the indicated topic.

## **Explain..., Why..., Suggest reasons for...**

Set out the causes of a phenomenon and/or the factors which influence its form/nature. This usually requires an understanding of processes. Explanation is a higher-level skill than description and this is often reflected in its greater mark weighting.

## **Interpret**

Ascribe meaning.

## **Justify**

Give reasons for the validity of a view or idea why some action should be undertaken. This might reasonably involve discussing and discounting alternative views or actions. Each of the views present or options available will have positives and negatives. For the outcome(s) chosen, the positives outweigh the negatives. Students should be able to explain all of this review process.

## **Outline..., Summarise...**

Provide a brief account of relevant information.

## **To what extent...**

Form and express a view as to the merit or validity of a view or statement after examining the evidence available and/or different sides of an argument.