

Maths Command words



Command words appear in every exam question. They are instructions telling you what you should include in your answer.

Task: complete the command word table below to help you gain a clearer understanding of the meaning of these words.

<i>Command word</i>	<i>Subject specific meaning</i>	<i>Create a exam style question which incorporates the command word</i>
<i>Calculate</i>	<i>Work out the value of something</i>	Calculate the values of the labelled angles.
Shade		
Find		
Describe		
Rotate		
Decide		
Sketch		
Design		
Compare		
Show		
Simplify		

Maths Command words



<i>Command word</i>	<i>Subject specific meaning</i>	<i>Create a exam style question which incorporates the command word</i>
Expand		
Enlarge		
Draw		
Circle		
Give		
Prove		
Rationalise		
Complete		
Use		
Set up an equation		
Construct		
Label		

Maths Command words



<i>Command word</i>	<i>Subject specific meaning</i>	<i>Create a exam style question which incorporates the command word</i>
Evaluate		
Work out		
Estimate		
Solve		
Factorise		
Justify		
Write down		

Command words by levels of complexity – Student task



Task: consider which categories in the table below the words on the right should go in.

Knowledge and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation

- Why
 Give
 Explain
 Assess
 Identify
 What is meant by
 Apply
 Calculate
 Examine
 Give an example
 Using examples
 With reference to the evidence
 How
 What
 Show how
 Discuss
 Name
 Using
 Outline
 Draw on your knowledge
 State
 Would you agree
 Using your knowledge
 What trends
 Demonstrate
 List
- Analyse
 Justify
 Discuss
 What factors
 Identify
 Organise
 Contrast
 Advise
 Evaluate
 Consider
 Explain why
 To what extent
 Assess the extent
 Weigh up
 Suggest
 calculate
 Predict
 Do you think
 How far
 Examine
 Show how
 Evaluate the suggestion
 Critically assess
 Assess the relative importance
 Define
 Compare
 Describe
 Which
 Explain

Command words by levels of complexity



Knowledge and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation
Define Describe Explain Give List Identify Outline State What is meant by Name	Apply Calculate Demonstrate Examine Give an example Using examples With reference to the evidence How Show how Why Which Using Draw on your knowledge Using your knowledge What trends Explain	Analyse Calculate Compare Contrast Discuss Explain Show how Which What factors Examine Identify Organise What	Advise Evaluate Assess Consider Discuss Explain why To what extent Assess the extent Weigh up Suggest Justify Predict Do you think How far Would you agree Why Evaluate the suggestion Critically assess Assess the relative importance

Command word meanings – Student task



Task: write down the meanings of the command words.

Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
Analyse		Evaluate	
Annotate		Explain	
Apply		Explore	
Argue		Give	
Assess		Identify	
Calculate		Justify	
Comment		Label	
Compare		List	
Consider		Name	
Contrast		Outline	
Criticise		Predict	
Debate		Relate	
Define		Show	
Design		Sketch	
Determine		State	
Draw		Suggest	
Estimate			

Command word meanings



Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
Analyse	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics	Evaluate	Judge from available evidence
Annotate	Add notation or labelling to a graph, diagram or other drawing	Explain	Give reasons
Apply	Put into effect in a recognised way	Explore	Investigate without preconceptions about the outcome
Argue	Present a reasoned case	Give	Produce an answer from recall or from given information
Assess	Make an informed judgement	Identify	Name or otherwise characterise
Calculate	Work out the value of something	Justify	Support a case with evidence
Comment	Present an informed opinion	Label	Provide appropriate names on a diagram
Compare	Identify similarities and/ or differences	List	List a name of features or points without further elaboration
Consider	Finish a task by adding to given information	Name	Identify using a recognised technical term
Contrast	Identify differences	Outline	Set out main characteristics
Criticise	Access worth against explicit expectations	Predict	Give a plausible outcome
Debate	Present different perspectives on an issue	Relate	Give a technical term or its equivalent
Define	Specify meaning	Show	Provide structured evidence to reach a conclusion
Design	Set out something will be done	Sketch	Draw approximately
Determine	Use given data or information to obtain an answer	State	Express in clear terms
Draw	Produce a diagram	Suggest	Present a possible case
Estimate	Assign an approximate value		