Command terms with definitions

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions. 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.

These command terms indicate the depth of treatment required.

Assessment objective 1

Define Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.

Draw 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.

Label Add labels to a diagram.

List Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation.

Measure Obtain a value for a quantity.

State Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.

Assessment objective 2

Annotate Add brief notes to a diagram or graph.

Calculate Obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working (unless

instructed not to do so).

Describe Give a detailed account.

Distinguish Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.

Estimate Obtain an approximate value.

Identify Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.

Outline Give a brief account or summary.

Assessment objective 3

Analyse Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.

Comment Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.

Compare Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations,

referring to both (all) of them throughout.

Compare Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or

and contrast situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.

Construct Display information in a diagrammatic or logical form.

Deduce Reach a conclusion from the information given.

Design Produce a plan, simulation or model.

Determine Obtain the only possible answer.

Discuss 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.

Evaluate Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.

Explain Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.

Predict Give an expected result.

Sketch Represent by means of a diagram or graph (labelled as appropriate). The sketch

should give a general idea of the required shape or relationship, and should include

relevant features.

Suggest Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.