

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

Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.

Argue

Present a reasoned case.

Assess

Make an informed judgement.

Comment

Present an informed opinion.

Compare

Identify similarities and/or differences.

Contrast

Identify differences.

Criticise

Assess worth against explicit expectations.

Debate

Present different perspectives on an issue.

Describe

Give an account of.

Discuss

Present key points.

Evaluate

State how you react when reading the text as in 'Evaluate the effects the descriptions have on you'.

Examine

Investigate closely.

Explain

Give reasons.

Find

Select the options that are true (or false).

How does the writer's use of language achieve an effect?

Describe how writers use language to achieve effects/impact (words/phrases/ language features/ language techniques/ sentence forms).

Illustrate

Present clarifying examples.

Review

Survey information.

Suggest

Present a possible case/solution.

Summarise

Present principal points without detail.

Support

Use quotations/ textual references to evidence your response.

What do you understand

Retrieve and interpret information from a text/s

Source: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700/teaching-resources>