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.

Assess

Make an informed judgement.

For example, 'Assess how effective your presentation technique(s) were in representing the data collected in this enquiry' (Specimen Paper 3, qu. 05.3).

Calculate

Work out the value of something.

For example, 'Using Figure 7, calculate the increase in retail sales value of Fairtrade bananas between 2000 and 2012' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 02.7).

Compare

Identify similarities and differences.

For example, 'Using Figure 4, compare HDI values in Africa and South America' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 02.1).

Complete

Finish the task by adding given information.

For example, 'Complete the following sentences:

The greatest number of category four tropical storms happen in the …………………… Ocean. Apart from very strong winds, one other associated weather feature of a category four storm is………………………' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 01.5).

Describe

Set out characteristics.

For example, 'Using Figure 9, describe the distribution of areas with existing licenses for fracking in the UK' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 03.2).

Discuss

Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.

For example, 'Discuss the effects of urban sprawl on people and the environment. Use Figure 3 and a case study of a major city in the UK' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 01.6).

Evaluate

Judge from available evidence.

For example, 'Evaluate the effectiveness of an urban transport scheme(s) you have studied. (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 01.8)

Explain

Set out purposes or reasons.

For example, 'Using Figure 12 and your own knowledge, explain how different landforms may be created by the transport and deposition of sediment along the coast' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 03.7).

Give

Produce an answer from recall.

For example, 'Give one condition that is needed for a tropical storm to form' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 01.6).

Identify

Name or otherwise characterise.

For example, 'Identify the glacial landform at grid reference 653532' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 05.1).

Justify

Support a case with evidence.

For example, 'Transnational corporations (TNCs) only bring advantages to the host country.' Do you agree with this statement? Justify your decision. (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 02.10)

Outline

Set out main characteristics.

For example, 'Outline one way that Fairtrade helps to deal with the problems of unequal development' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 02.8).

State

Express in clear terms.

For example, 'State one characteristic of the course of the River Ouse in grid square 5754' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 04.1).

Suggest

Present a possible case.

For example, 'Suggest how the sea defences shown in Figure 11 help to protect the coastline' (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 03.6).

To what extent

Judge the importance or success of (strategy, scheme, project).

For example, 'To what extent do urban areas in lower income countries (LICs) or newly emerging economies (NEEs) provide social and economic opportunities for people?' (Specimen Paper 2, qu. 01.4).

Use evidence to support this statement

To select and present information to prove or disprove something.

For example, 'Weather in the UK is becoming more extreme.' Use evidence to support this statement. (Specimen Paper 1, qu. 01.4)

Specifications that use this resource:

GCSE Geography 8035 (https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035)

Document URL

https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/gcse/geography/teach/command-words

Last updated 03 Aug 2020

© AQA