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Supported by:



Exam Question Terminology

Each exam question will start with a 'command' verb, which gives you an idea of what you have to do. This booklet is designed to help explain some of the terminology that you may come across.





Common Terminology:

- **Identify** — this tells you that you need to **select** from a list of options, **point something out** or give a **list** of main features.
- **Describe** — this tells you to **provide a series of points**, which usually need to be linked and that includes all the main features.
- **Explain** — this tells you to **provide an explanation** with **reasoning**. You will need to use words such as ‘because’ or ‘therefore’ to help you to provide explanations.
- **Discuss** — this tells you to **provide a response** that explores the issue or situation in the question. You should consider different **viewpoints** and **contrasting ideas**.
- **Analyse** — this tells you to **examine an idea** or some information and explore each part. It asks you to **justify reasons** for any **conclusions** you reach.
- **Evaluate** — this tells you to **provide a reasoned argument**. You must then provide a conclusion in which you make a decision on the most appropriate option and justify your choice.
- **Assess** — make reasoned arguments with a **conclusion**.
- **Compare** — measure or note the **similarities** and **differences** between two or more things.



- **Classify** — group, place or scale a number of **characteristics**.
- **Calculate** — **compute** or ‘work out’ a problem, sometimes using numbers.
- **Contrast** — similar to compare but focusses on **differences**.
- **Complete** — add information to a table or a graph until it is **final**.
- **Define** — give the **meaning** of a word or phrase.
- **Examine** — **justify** a concept by fully evaluating an example.
- **Give** — **recall** a fact.
- **Identify**—**select** the right answer from a range of answers (multiple choice).
- **Justify** — **give reasons** for your answer.
- **Label** — **add names/information** to a diagram.
- **Select** — **choose** the most relevant answer from a range .
- **State** — **recall** a fact but often in relation to some data or graphical information.
- **Which** — used in **multiple choice** questions.