

Command Words

**Command Words** are **instructional**, **operational** or **task** words. They give you guidance as to how to answer an academic question.

Example:

**Analyse** the impact of quality management on business development, giving examples within your answer

The learner should support their answer with examples

**Command Word**

Some commonly used **Command Words** and their meanings:

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| **ANALYSE** | Separate information into components and identify their characteristics |
| **ANNOTATE** | Add notation or labelling into a graph, diagram or other drawing |
| **APPLY** | Put into effect in a recognised way |
| **ARGUE** | Present a reasoned case |
| **ASSESS** | Make an informed judgement |
| **CALCULATE** | Work out the value of something |
| **COMMENT** | Present an informed comment |
| **COMPARE** | Identify similarities and/or differences |
| **COMPLETE** | Finish a task by adding to given information |
| **CONSIDER** | Review and respond to given information |
| **CONTRAST** | Identify differences |
| **CRITICISE** | Access worth against explicit expectations |
| **DEBATE** | Present different perspectives on an issue |
| **DEDUCE** | Draw conclusions from information provided |
| **DEFINE** | Specify meaning |
| **DESCRIBE** | Give an account of |
| **DETERMINE** | Use given data or information to obtain an answer |
| **DEVELOP** | Take forward or build upon given information |
| **DISCUSS** | Present key points |
| **DISTINGUISH** | List the differences between different items |
| **ESTIMATE** | Assign an approximate value |
| **EVALUATE** | Judge from available evidence |
| **EXPLAIN** | Give reasons |
| **EXPLORE** | Investigate without preconceptions about the outcome |
| **IDENTIFY** | Name or otherwise characterise |
| **JUSTIFY** | Support a case with evidence |
| **LABEL** | Provide appropriate names on a diagram |
| **LIST** | List a number of features or points without further elaboration |
| **NAME** | Identify using a recognised technical term |
| **OUTLINE** | Set out main characteristics |
| **PREDICT** | Give a plausible outcome |
| **SHOW** | Provide structured evidence to reach a conclusion |
| **STATE** | Express in clear terms |
| **SUGGEST** | Present a possible case |

**Recap: Why Command Words Are Important**

Command words are the words in the exam questions or assignments (usually one of the first words) which indicate **what the examiner wants** and the **style of response needed.**

**BUT!** Whilst knowing what the command word means ***is*** important for understanding the demands of the question, remember that the rest of the wording in a question is just as important to read as it will add **context** and might contain useful **keywords**.