

Exam Command Words!

Examiners word exam questions carefully to ensure they are 'testing' the skills you have learnt during KS3 and KS4...

However, students often lose marks in exams either because they haven't read the question properly or because they haven't fully understood what the question requires them to do in their answer.

If you understand the exam question fully, it will help you understand what sort of answer is required.

Exam Command Words!

So...once you understand the precise meaning of exam question words and phrases, you will be able to structure your answer to 'show off' your knowledge in the most effective way and gain more marks in exams.

Exam Command Words!

Look at the exam questions below. These are all real questions that you might find in your exams. Identify the exam command words that have been used in each question.

12. Calculate an estimate of the mean height. You must show your working.
[4 marks]

Describe one difference in the way the melody is accompanied when played the third time.
[1 mark]

3. Explain some of the thoughts and feelings the writer has as she cycles home.
[8 marks]

Question 2.

In what ways were the lives of Indians affected by the arrival of white settlers on the Great Plains?
Explain your answer.

'UK weather is becoming more extreme.'
Use Figure 8 and your own knowledge to discuss this statement.
[8 marks]

Exam Command Words!

Look at the questions below. These are all read exam questions that you might find in your exams. Identify the exam command words that have been used in each question.

Sports quiz programmes are often on television.

State two other types of television programme that promote or cover sport and give an example of each.

(4 marks)

***1** The length of a rectangle is x cm. The width of the rectangle is 3 cm less than the length. The perimeter of the rectangle is 40 cm.

Set up and solve an equation to work out the length of the rectangle.

[4 marks]

3 (a) The dead plants in the nest decay. The decaying process helps to keep the eggs warm for many weeks.

Suggest how.

[3 marks]

Compare how the writers have conveyed their different views and experiences of the festival and fair they describe.

[12 marks]

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

[8 marks]

Exam Command Words

- You have been given cards with some exam commands and their definitions.
- Match the definition to the exam command to see what the question is asking you to do.

Extension:

When you've matched all the definitions and commands, try to decide which subjects you would use each exam command in.

Exam Command Words: Answers

Advise	Help somebody reach a decision through a mixture of facts, opinions, commands and options. Try to make advice balanced and reasoned. You need to show knowledge of something to advise effectively so using subject specific terms can be useful.
Analyse	Look closely at the detail; give reasons why or how something is done and the effect of this on the target audience – use PEA paragraphs to help you to back up your points with evidence and make sure you clearly explain your thoughts.
Argue	Put forward a point of view in a structured and reasoned way – usually one sided but takes account of other points of view. You may choose to include and demolish a counter argument.
Calculate	Work out. Note here that marks are usually awarded for both the process and outcome. Ask your teachers if you are not sure.
Compare	Look closely at two or more things which have something in common in order to see how they are the same and how they are different. This is looking for an analytical response – PEA paragraphs are useful.

Exam Command Words: Answers

Describe	Give a detailed account of something. Tell the examiner in your own words what/ how/ or why something happens; you must use words precisely (this means using scientific terms in Science, mathematical terms in Maths, business terms in Business Studies, drama terms in Drama and so on...
Draw	Similar to 'sketch' or 'illustrate'.
Evaluate	You need to give thought to different opinions and weigh up the strength of different arguments. You should try to provide evidence for your points and clear explanations as to why you think the way you do.
Explain	Give reasons for how or why something happens; you need to give examples. 'Explain' questions normally carry a lot of marks and they require you to treat the subject analytically – often using a PEA paragraph will help in certain subjects
Justify	Give a reason to support an argument/ give an explanation for something/ defend a point of view.

State	Write, briefly, the main point. Be as clear, relevant and precise with your language as you can be.
Suggest	Offer ideas/ put forward ideas/ propose something.