

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Physical Education

Command Words



OTHER GUIDANCE

Command words

Name/ What is the name of....?	This usually requires a technical term or its equivalent. Answers to this type of question normally involve no more than one or two words.
List	A number of features or points, each often no more than a single word, with no further elaboration or detail required.
Define/ What do you understand by the term....?	“Define” requires a statement giving the meaning of a particular term. “What do you understand by the term....?” is used more frequently as it emphasises that a formal definition as such is not required.
Outline/comment on	A brief summary of the main points. The best guide to the amount of detail required lies in the mark allocations; approximately 1–1½ mins. should be allowed per mark. This generally works out at around two or three lines in a standard answer-booklet for each mark.
Describe	Use of qualitative or quantitative information to show understanding of a statement, or of a relationship between factors.
Describe how you....	The emphasis is on the word you and the expression is often used when asking questions about experimental design. What is required is an account of how something could be done by you as a student, working in the context of an A Level specification in an ordinary school or college.
Explain	This creates major difficulties for many students. A reason, justification, or interpretation must be given, not a description. The term “Describe” answers the question “What?”; the term “Explain” answers the question “Why”. Thus, “Explain a curve on a graph” requires reasons for any change of direction, or pattern that is evident.
Identify.... and explain	Linking of cause/problem and effect/solution. Marks awarded only if linkage is made.
Suggest	“Suggest” is used when it is not possible to give the answer directly from the facts that form part of the subject material detailed in the specification. The answer should be based on the general understanding rather than on recall of learnt material. It also indicates that there may be a number of correct alternatives.
Discuss	Presentation of both sides of an argument, seeking an opinion based on knowledge and analysis with a justified conclusion.
Give the evidence for/ Using examples from...	Answers to questions involving these phrases must follow the instructions. Marks are always awarded for appropriate references to the information provided. General answers, however comprehensive, will not gain maximum credit.
Draw	A properly labelled drawing is required.
Sketch	Outline of the main features
Calculate	This term is used where the only requirement is a numerical answer expressed in appropriate units. The additional instruction, “Show your working”, will be used if details or methods are required.

State	“State” falls short of describing and amounts to no more than making bullet points.
Advantages	Clear statement of why one condition is better than another. Would normally need justification and/or qualification relevant to question.
Characteristics	Common agreed factors for a situation, structure or process.
Differences	A comparison between two states given in the question. Students should be precise and not be tempted to wander here.
Principle	Theoretical concept underpinning a practical example.