



Glossary of command words

Command words are those words in a question that tell the candidate what they have to do. The glossary has been deliberately kept brief with respect to the descriptions of meanings. Remember that the meaning of a term also depends on its context.

Command word	Meaning
<i>Annotate</i>	Add labels of notes or short comments, usually to a diagram, map or photograph to describe or explain.
<i>Calculate</i>	Work out a numerical answer. In general, working should be shown, especially where two or more steps are involved.
<i>Compare</i>	Write about what is similar and different about two things. For a comparison, two elements or themes are required. <u>Two separate descriptions do not make a comparison.</u>
<i>Complete</i>	Add the remaining detail or details required.
<i>Contrast</i>	Write about the differences between two things.
<i>Define or State the meaning of or What is meant by...</i>	Give the meaning or definition of a word or phrase.
<i>Describe</i>	Write what something is like or where it is. Describe may be used for questions about resources in the question paper (describe the trend of a graph, the location of a settlement on a map, etc.). It may also be used when you need to describe something from memory (describe a meander, etc.). It is often coupled with other command words such as <i>Name and describe</i> (name the feature and say what it is like), <i>Describe and explain</i> (say what it is like and give reasons for this).
<i>Devise or Plan</i>	Present a particular feature such as a form or questionnaire to meet a specific requirement or requirements.
<i>Draw</i>	Make a sketch of. Often coupled with <i>a labelled diagram</i> (draw a diagram/illustration with written notes to identify its features).
<i>Explain or Account for or Give reasons for...</i>	Write about why something occurs or happens.
<i>Giving your views or Comment on</i>	Say <u>what you think</u> about something.
<i>How</i>	In what way? To what extent? By what means/method? May be coupled with <i>Show how</i> (prove how, demonstrate how).
<i>Identify</i>	Pick out something from information you have been given.



<i>Illustrating your answer</i>	Account for by using specific examples or diagrams. (Often coupled with <i>by a labeled diagram</i>).
<i>Insert or Label</i>	Add specific names or details to an illustrative technique in response to a particular requirement.
<i>Justify</i>	Say why you chose something or why you think in a certain way.
<i>List</i>	Identify and name a number of features to meet a particular purpose.
<i>Locate</i>	Find where something is placed or state where something is found or mark it on a map or diagram.
<i>Measure</i>	Implies that the quantity concerned can be directly obtained from a suitable measuring instrument.
<i>Name</i>	To state or specify or identify. To give the word or words by which a specific feature is known or to give examples which illustrate a particular feature.
<i>Predict</i>	Use your own knowledge and understanding, probably along with information provided, to state what might happen next.
<i>Refer to or With reference to</i>	Write an answer which uses some of the ideas provided in map/photograph/diagram, etc. or other additional material such as a case study.
<i>State</i>	Set down in brief detail. To refer to an aspect of a particular feature by a short statement or by words or by a single word.
<i>Study</i>	Look carefully at (usually one of the Figures in the question paper).
<i>Suggest</i>	Set down your ideas on or knowledge of. Often coupled with <i>why</i> (requires a statement or an explanatory statement referring to a particular feature or features).
<i>Use or Using the information provided</i>	<u>Base your answer on the information.</u>
<i>With the help of information in</i>	Write an answer which <u>uses some of the information provided</u> as well as additional material.
<i>What</i>	Used to form a question concerned with selective ideas/details/factors.
<i>What differences are shown between A and B</i>	Use comparative statements to describe the changes involved as A changes to B. Factual descriptions of A and B are not required.
<i>Where</i>	At what place? To what place? From what place?
<i>Why</i>	For what cause or reason?