

## Command Words Key

Keyword	What you must do	Hints and Tips
Calculate	Use numbers given in the question to work out the answer.	Include units in your answer. You might need to show your working.
Compare	Describe the similarities and/or differences of something	Use comparative words such as 'however', 'whereas' 'but' and 'on the other hand'.
Complete	Answers should be written in the space provided, e.g on a diagram, in spaces in a sentence or in a table.	Sometimes the words need to be picked from a list. It will say if they can be used more than once.
Describe	State facts, events, a trend in results or a process.	Make sure you use the correct scientific keywords.
Evaluate	Describe the advantages and disadvantages. Be critical. Weigh up how effective something is. A more detailed version of compare.	Use comparative and superlative words such as 'better', 'more than', 'less than', 'quicker', 'more expensive', 'on the other hand.'
Explain	State the reasons why something happens scientifically. A higher level skill than describe because it deals with the 'why'.	Suitable linking words could be 'so', 'therefore', 'because', 'due to', 'since', 'this means' or 'meaning that'.
State, give, name, write down	Only a short answer is required, not a detailed explanation. Often only one or two words are required.	If the question asks you to state, give, or write down <b>one</b> example, you should write down <b>only</b> the specified number of answers or you may lose marks.
Suggest	You need to apply your knowledge and understanding to a new situation.	Useful words to use are 'may', 'might', 'could', and 'I think that'.
Use the information in the passage /diagram /graph/table to... With reference to....	The answer <b>must</b> be based on the information given in the question.	Unless you are specifically asked to, use only the information in the question.
Analyse	Look closely at the detail; give reasons <b>why</b> or <b>how</b> something is done and the effect of this	You might use a structure such a PEA or PEE to back up your thoughts with evidence.

Identify	Pick out/ select/ find/ highlight	It might be a basic question but could involve some analysis. Check how many marks the question is worth!
Justify	Give a reason(s) to support an argument/ give an explanation for something/ defend a point of view.	You will need evidence to support your case.
Argue	Put forward a point of view in a structured and reasoned way - usually one sided but takes account of other points of view.	Useful phrases might be 'some critics argue that...', 'but I disagree because...'
Define	Give the meaning of...	
Outline	Describe the whole thing but briefly	You'll need to show you know the breadth of a topic, but not depth for this bit.
Choose	Pick the best fit	You might need to shade, tick, circle a box or answer. Check that you're following instructions!
To what extent	Judge the effectiveness (or not) of something	You might visualise a line and consider where you might place yourself on it.
Discuss	Consider different aspects of a topic and how they interrelate and the extent to which they are important.	