

Command terms

All exam questions contain one or more command terms — words and phrases that tell you how you should answer an exam question. Each command term is associated with one or more assessment objectives.

These are some of the command words used by exam boards for each assessment objective.

Go through past exam papers and highlight the terms that have been used.

Exam boards provide descriptions of their command terms:

- AQA: www.tinyurl.com/ya75wbwe
- Edexcel: Google 'Edexcel command words'
- OCR: www.tinyurl.com/yold7qr5
- WJEC/Eduqas: www.tinyurl.com/yb8gkjt8

In psychology there are three assessment objectives

AO2 Application/practice

Apply	Improve
Calculate	Integrate
Create	Justify
Demonstrate	Plan
Describe	Predict
Design	Solve
Determine	Suggest
Draw	Synthesise
Explain	Use
Identify	With reference to

The clue for an AO2 question is there will always be a stem/scenario/context.

Doing effective AO2

- Show your knowledge.
 - Link to the context.
- If the question does not have an AO3 command term then don't add it.

AO3 Commenting

Evaluate	Develop
Analyse	Discuss
Assess	Distinguish
Comment	Examine
Compare	Interpret
Contrast	Judge
Conclude	Justify

Doing effective AO3

- Be accurate.
- Use specialist terms.
- Weigh up strengths and weaknesses of the knowledge.
- Use research evidence BUT focus on what the research shows us rather than description.
- Use counter evidence.
- If you are evaluating a study, consider the methodology.
- Use issues and debates — but ensure they are contextualised.
- Formulate a balanced conclusion NOT a summary.
- Use the skill of analysis
- **Compare and contrast**
- Describe the elements you are comparing.
- Look at relative strengths and weakness.

Beware making generic criticisms

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Describe	Outline
Complete	Present
Define	Recall
Demonstrate	Report
Discuss	Select
Explain	State
Give	Suggest
Identify	Summarise
Illustrate	What is meant by
Label	
List	
Name	

Doing effective AO1

For describe	For outline
■ Explain theories and/or studies.	■ Select the most important points rather than write everything you know.
■ Demonstrate your knowledge.	■ Set out the steps of a procedure or a process.
■ Demonstrate your understanding by presenting facts logically, i.e. show organisation.	■ Use the marks awarded is a guide.
■ Demonstrate your understanding by telling a story — make your account coherent.	

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