

Glossary of command terms

Command terms for psychology

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

These command terms indicate the depth of treatment required.

Assessment objective 1—knowledge and understanding

Command term	Definition
Describe	Give a detailed account.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.

Assessment objective 2—application and analysis

Command term	Definition
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Apply	Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue.
Comment	Give a judgement based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Design	Produce a plan, simulation or model.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information.
Predict	Give an expected result.
Suggest	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.

Assessment objective 3—synthesis and evaluation

Command term	Definition
Compare and contrast	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
To what extent?	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.

