Command terms for chemistry

Command terms with definitions

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

Classify	Arrange or order by class or category.
Define	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.
Draw	Represent by means of a labeled, accurate diagram or graph, using a pencil. A ruler (straight edge) should be used for straight lines. Diagrams should be drawn to scale. Graphs should have points correctly plotted (if appropriate) and joined in a straight line or smooth curve.
Label	Add labels to a diagram
List	Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation.
Measure	Obtain a value for a quantity.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.

Assessment objective 2

Annotate	Add brief notes to a diagram or graph.
Apply	Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue.

Calculate	Obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working (unless instructed not to do so).
Describe	Give a detailed account
Distinguish	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.
Estimate	Obtain an approximate value.
Formulate	Express precisely and systematically the relevant concept(s) or argument(s).
Identify	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
Outline	Give a brief account or summary.

Assessment objective 3

Analyze	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Comment	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Compare	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and contrast	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Construct	Display information in a diagrammatic or logical form.
Deduce	Reach a conclusion from the information given.
Demonstrate	Make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application.
Derive	Manipulate a mathematical relationship to give a new equation or relationship.
Design	Produce a plan, simulation or model.

Determine	Obtain the only possible answer.
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.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Explore	Undertake a systematic process of discovery.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information.
Justify	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Predict	Give an expected result.
Show	Give the steps in a calculation or derivation.
Sketch	Represent by means of a diagram or graph (labeled as appropriate). The sketch should give a general idea of the required shape or relationship, and should include relevant features.
Solve	Obtain the answer(s) using algebraic and/or numerical and/or graphical methods.
Suggest	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.