Command words
GCSE History 8145

Introduction

Command words are the words and phrases used in exams and other assessment tasks that tell students how they should answer the question.

The following command words are taken from Ofqual's official list of command words and their meanings. In addition, where necessary, we have included our own command words and their meanings to complement Ofqual's list.

Describe

Set out characteristics

Example question

Describe the problems faced by Kaiser Wilhelm II's governments in ruling Germany up to 1914.

Example answer

In this instance, students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key feature (the problems facing Kaiser Wilhelm) by recall. In order to achieve full marks students should make three developed points.

Example mark scheme

Target:	Demonstrate knowledge of the key features and characteristics of the period studies (AO1)	
Level 2	**Developed knowledge, based on understanding** eg:	**4-6**

- Germany's rapid industrial expansion created social problems in the towns and the growth of militant Trade Unions and extremist groups.
- The growing power of the socialists made it difficult to secure a majority for the government in the Reichstag. The Kaiser feared that anarchists and socialists threatened the lives of his family, so anti-socialist laws were needed.
- Government needed to raise money to pay for the cost of Germany's defence/naval building programme but taxation was unpopular.

Level 1	**Simple knowledge statements** eg:	**1-3**

- Germany was industrialising very quickly.
- The socialists were becoming more powerful.

- Government needed to raise taxes.

Guidance

This command word is tested in the context of AO1. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding about key features and characteristics of the period studied. Students would normally present their answers in narrative or list form.

Explain

Set out (eg purposes or reasons)

Example question

Explain the consequences of the Moroccan Crisis of 1905.

Example answer

In this instance a student would be required to identify one or more consequences (eg increased British suspicions towards Germany) and then set out in detail their effects (eg the consolidation of ties between the Entente powers and/or the division of Europe into two armed camps).

Example mark scheme

	Target	**Knowledge, understanding and explanation of the consequence(s) of a key feature of the period (AO1: 4; AO2:4)**	
	Level 4	**Answers that develop out of Level 3 and provide links between the consequence(s) of the event and the wider context of the period**	7-8
		Extends Level 3.	
		eg: …these suspicions caused by the First Moroccan Crisis gave rise to naval talks between Britain and France and so this helped consolidate the ties between the Entente powers and further divided Europe into two armed camps…	
	Level 3	**Developed answer about the consequence(s) of the event**	5-6
		eg British suspicions of German naval ambitions and the threat they posed to the Empire were heightened as Morocco was strategically important to the Mediterranean…	
	Level 2	**Simple answer about the consequence(s) of the event)** Answers identify consequence(s) or result(s) of the event.	3-4
		eg - increased British suspicions of Germany - brought Britain and France closer together - a conference was held to resolve crisis at Algeciras (1906) - Germany had to promise to stay out of Morocco.	
	Level 1	**Identifies and describes aspect(s) of the event**.	1-2
		Answers provide detail of the event.	
		eg	

- there was an international crisis
- France and Germany threatened to go to war.

Candidates either submit no evidence or fail to address the question   0

Guidance

This is a straightforward command word which is often applied in relation to the testing of second-order concepts (AO2) such as consequence or causation. Ofqual's subject guidance for History defines 'explain' as 'giving an account of the outcome of analysis and/or justifying a conclusion in questions requiring an evaluation'.

Note: Repeat as necessary for each Command Word

Appendix A: Ofqual approved list of command words and meanings
From Ofqual's Access by fair design publication.

This list of command words and their meanings is taken from the document Access by fair design published by Ofqual. It are not a definitive nor exhaustive list but we should be consistent in our use of command words with the meanings provided here.

Analyse separate information into components and identify their characteristics
Assess make an informed judgement
Consider review and respond to given information
Criticise assess worth against explicit expectations
Evaluate judge from available evidence
Examine investigate closely
Explore investigate without preconceptions about the outcome
Review survey information

Comment present an informed opinion
Deduce draw conclusions from information provided
Define specify meaning
Describe set out characteristics
Discuss present key points
Explain set out purposes or reasons
Illustrate present clarifying examples
Interpret translate information into recognisable form
Outline set out main characteristics
Relate demonstrate connections between items
State express in clear terms
Summarise present principal points without detail

Argue present a reasoned case
Debate present different perspectives on an issue
Give produce an answer from recall
Justify support a case with evidence
Prove demonstrate validity on the basis of evidence
Suggest present a possible case

Calculate work out the value of something
Estimate assign an approximate value

Compare identify similarities
Contrast identify differences

Apply put into effect in a recognised way
Complete finish a task by adding to given information
Develop take forward or build upon given information
Identify name or otherwise characterise