

Command terms for language and literature

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.

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 similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and contrast	Give an account of the similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Contrast	Give an account of the 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.
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.
Justify	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
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.

