

Command terms for visual arts

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.

Command term	Assessment level	objective	Definition
Analyze	AO2		Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Apply	AO2		Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue.
Compare and contrast		AO3	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Contrast	AO3		Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Demonstrate	AO2		Make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application.
Describe	AO1		Give a detailed account.
Discuss	AO3		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	AO3	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	AO3	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.

Explain	AO2	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes
Explore	AO2	Undertake a systematic process of discovery.
Identify	AO1	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
Justify	AO3	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
List	AO4	Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation.
Outline	AO1	Give a brief account or summary.
Present	AO1	Offer for display, observation, examination or consideration.
Show	AO4	Give the steps in a calculation or derivation.
To what extent	AO3	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.