

Command Words:

These are the words used in an exam question which make it clear exactly what you are asked to do. If you do not understand what you are being asked to do it is unlikely you are going to write what is being expected of you. The most common command words used are as follows:

Compare – use comparative words to say how things are similar or different from each other – should use words/ phrases such as *larger than, smaller than, more vegetation than, higher than etc, similar height etc.*

Contrast – here you are simply focusing on the differences between two things (NOT similarities!)

Define – this means simply give the meaning of a term

Describe – here you need to say what the characteristics of something are. You might be asked to describe a photograph or pattern on a graph etc. Imagine you are having to describe it to someone on the phone who can't see what you are looking at – so say exactly what you see!

Discuss – if you are asked to discuss you will need to talk about the important points of an argument

Estimate – this means give an approximate value

Explain – this requires an explanation or reasons for something happening and tests your understanding! For example why has tourism grown over the last 50 years?

Justify – this requires you to back up an answer you are giving i.e. give reasons for it, perhaps using evidence from a photograph or map.

Name, give, identify or state – for example "Give one reason for a high birth rate", "Name one example of an ecotourism destination you have studied" – these types of questions are often only worth one mark.

Outline – here you will be expected to summarise the main points, which may involve some explanation, but it is the main characteristics you will be expected to concentrate on.

Suggest / give reasons for – like explain BUT this is often the case where there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer as long as it is possible and a sensible suggestion.

Use data in your answer – if you are asked to do this, marks will be available for it and therefore you must use data in your answer – e.g. quote figures from a graph.