

Common command words used in GCSE questions

Calculate/work out ...	Tells you to produce a numerical answer.
Compare . . .	tells you to describe the similarities and/or differences in material arising from the syllabus content or in sets of data provided.
Complete ...	Tells you that you need to enter the answer in spaces provided in a diagram, table etc.
Describe ...	Tells you to state in words, or as diagrams, the important points of the topic.
Draw a bar chart ...	Tells you that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ for a graph where the axes are labelled and scaled you need to plot as bars a series of values; ◆ for a graph where the axes are labelled and not scaled you need to add scales and plot as bars a series of values.
Draw a graph ...	Tells you that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ for a graph where the axes are labelled and scaled you need to plot as points a series of values and then draw an appropriate line; ◆ for a graph where the axes are labelled and not scaled you need to add scales, plot as points a series of values and then draw an appropriate line.
Explain how/why ...	Tells you to apply reasoning to the recall of theory
Give a reason/how /why.. .	Tells you that a reason is needed which is an application of scientific knowledge.
Give/name/state/ write down ...	Tells you that a brief answer is required without supporting evidence.
List ...	Tells you that a series of brief answers is required, each answer being written one after the other.
Predict ...	Tells you that a brief answer is required without supporting evidence, and that the answer is based on you making logical links between various pieces of information.
Sketch a graph ...	Tells you to draw a line on a grid indicating a trend or pattern without the need first to plot a series of points.
Suggest ...	Tells you that there is no unique answer, and that you are expected to base the answer on scientific knowledge and/or scientific principles.
Use the information	Tells you that the answer must be based on information provided within the context of the question.
Use your understanding /ideas of ... to ...	Tells you the concept around which the answer should be framed.
What is meant by ...	Tells you that a definition should be given, together with some relevant comment on the significance or context of the question.

Source: Joint Council for General Qualifications