

Literacy

Command
Words

SQA Command Words...what are they?

Command words are the words that will be used in your exam papers that tell you how to tackle each question. Here is a breakdown of the command words in the subjects we offer at Lockerbie Academy.

Business

Command word	Meaning
Identity	Give the name or characteristic of something.
Give	Pick some key factors and name them.
State	Name or identity.
Suggest	State a possible reason or course of action.
Define	Give a clear meaning.
Outline	Identify plus an example/feature.
Describe	Provide a thorough description of features/characteristics - give as much information as you can to say exactly what something is.
Explain	Give details about how and why something is as it is.
Compare	Identify similarities and differences between two or more factors.
Distinguish	Identify the differences between two or more factors.
Justify	Give good reason to support suggestions or reinforce your suggestion with an advantage.
Discuss	Examine closely taking account of strengths and weaknesses in an argument - for or against. It can't just be a list – points must be developed.

Maths

Command word	Meaning
Evaluate	Usually used in algebra to mean substitute numbers in place of letters and work out an answer.
Justify/Explain(by calculation)	Clearly say why the value you calculated led you to your conclusion (e.g. "since 6 is greater than 4.....")
Hence	Use the previous answer you just worked out or the information just stated in the question to work out the next part.
Expand	Specific algebraic process also called "multiplying out brackets"
Determine/Calculate	Decide on a mathematical process and use it to work out a value.
Simplify	Specific process relating to fractions, for algebraic fractions, this usually involves factorising one or both parts of the fraction.
Prove/show that	Work out the answer to a question and state that it works out with the answer you were asked to prove. Pupils often erroneously start with the given answer and try to work backwards.
Find	Work out the value of.
State	Write the answer/value, no working required.
Solve	Specific algebraic process to work out the unknown (letter) term(s) in an equation
Express	Give your answer in the form indicated in the question.
Explain	Include the mathematical fact that you used to form your conclusion. (e.g. "because the remainder is 0, $x+5$ is a factor.")
Give (your answer to ... significant figures/decimal places)	The answer must be rounded to the stated accuracy. An unrounded answer should be included in the working

Biology

Throughout Paper 2 you will be faced with questions that contain certain command words e.g. 'identify', 'describe', 'explain', 'compare', 'calculate', 'predict' and 'suggest'.

The explanations of these command words are given below:

Command word	Meaning
Identify	You must name, give or state. Your answer need only answer or present in a brief form. Eg: Question: Name the part of the brain in which thermoreceptors are found. Answer: Hypothalamus.
Describe	You must provide a statement as opposed to simply one word. Eg: Question: Describe the response of effectors to a decrease in body temperature. Answer: Blood vessels narrow.
Explain	You must provide a reason for the information given. Eg: Question: Explain why it is important for a mammal to regulate its body temperature. Answer: So that enzymes are at their optimum temperature.
Compare	You must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences between topics being examined. Eg: Question: Compare regulators and conformers in terms of their ecological niches. Answer: Regulators have a wider range of ecological niches compared to conformers.
Predict	You must indicate what may happen based on the available information. Eg: Question: Predict the number of..
Suggest	You must apply your knowledge and understanding to a new situation. Eg: Question: Suggest how the temperature of the tubes could be kept constant. Answer: Use a water bath.
Calculate	You must determine a number from given facts, figures or information. Eg: Question: Calculate the percentage increase in...

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Chemistry

Command word	Meaning
State or Give or Name or Identify	You simply have to recall a fact, definition or equation and write it down
Describe	You need to say what you see / what happened / what will happen. Remember if you are being asked about a colour change to give the before AND after colours.
Explain	You must describe WHY things happen rather than WHAT took place.
Calculate	You need to select the correct equations and formula to work out a mathematical answer. Pay attention to units (if they are given in the question you do not need to provide them in your answer so if you do include them they must be correct!). Be sure to show all your working for all calculations as partial marks are given for this.
Predict	Provide a plausible value based on the data provided
Conclude	Draw conclusions based on a text or set of information or data
Draw	You must draw a diagram or structural formula
Suggest	Apply your knowledge to a new situation
Using your knowledge of chemistry	This is your opportunity to show what you know about a particular topic. Include structures and chemical equations where you can.

Physics

National 5 Physics SQA Command Words

Here is a table showing some of the command words that are used in the exams. When you go through past paper questions you will see these questions being frequently used

Command word	Meaning
Describe	you must provide a statement or structure of characteristics and/or features;
Determine or calculate	you must determine a number from given facts, figures or information; You should use numbers given in the question to work out the answer. You should always show your working, as it may be possible for the examiner to award some marks for the method even if the final answer is wrong. Always give the units as the final mark is for the answer and unit.
Estimate	you must determine an approximate value for something;
Explain	you must relate cause and effect and/or make relationships between things clear. Students should make something clear, or state the reasons for something happening. The answer should not be a simple list of reasons. This means that points in the answer must be linked coherently and logically. All of the stages/steps in an explanation must be included to gain full marks.
Identify, name, give, or state	you need only name or present in brief form. Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description. Often it can be answered with a single word, phrase or sentence. If the question asks you to state, give, or write down one (or two etc) examples, you should write down only the specified number of answers, or you may not be given the mark for some correct examples given.
Justify	you must give reasons to support their suggestions or conclusions, eg this might be by identifying an appropriate relationship and the effect of changing variables;
Predict	you must suggest what may happen based on available information;
Show that	you must use the appropriate formula to prove something e.g. a given value – All steps, including the stated answer and units , must be shown;
Suggest	you must apply their knowledge and understanding of physics to a new situation. A number of responses are acceptable: marks will be awarded for any suggestions that are supported by knowledge and understanding of physics.
Use your knowledge of physics or aspect of physics to comment on	you must apply your skills, knowledge and understanding to respond appropriately to the problem/situation presented (for example by making a statement of principle(s) involved and/or a relationship or equation, and applying these to respond to the problem/situation). you will be rewarded for the breadth and/or depth of their conceptual understanding.

Use the information in the passage/ diagram/ graph/ table to...	The answer must be based on the information given in the question. Unless the information given in the question is used, no marks can be given.
Compare	This requires you to describe the similarities and/or differences between things, not just write about one. If you are asked to 'compare x with y', you need to write down something about x compared to y, using comparative words such as 'better', 'more than', 'less than', 'quicker', 'more expensive', 'on the other hand.'

It is important that you don't use the wrong adverb for a quantity.

Don't use the terms

Quicker, slower, faster
for words such as time, acceleration, velocity.

Use term

longer, shorter for time
greater or less for acceleration and velocity.

English

National 5

RUAE paper:

Command word	Meaning
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Explain (why)	used to assess understanding of a writer's ideas (always followed by 'in your own words')
Explain (how)	used to assess the skills of analysis
Identify	used to assess the skill of summarising (identifying the main points or ideas)

CR paper
SST

Command word	Meaning
Identify or summarise	candidates are required to identify and isolate a writer's key points/key narrative events, etc. Candidates are instructed to use their own words
Explain	candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of eg characterisation, narrative, theme or to analyse a writer's use of language (eg word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, punctuation, sound, etc)
Show	candidates are asked to show how the writer explores a given topic, or uses a literary or linguistic technique, across more than one poem/short story, or a longer text in its entirety

CE

Command word	Meaning
Describe and explain	All of these command words invite candidates to demonstrate their skills of understanding, analysis, and evaluation. Each question includes the instruction: 'by referring to appropriate techniques', which serves as a reminder for candidates of the need to demonstrate skills of analysis. In the language questions, candidates are asked to refer to 'specific examples' of language from their studies in this genre.
Show how	
Explain how	
Explain and evaluate	

English

Higher

RUAE paper

Command word	Meaning
Identify/explain	used to assess understanding and inference of a writer's ideas and/or views (accompanied by 'use your own words')
Analyse (how)	used to assess the skills of analysis
Explain (the function of)	used to assess understanding of a writer's use of structure
Identify (three key areas)	used to assess the skills of summarising and inference (identifying the main ideas with accompanying evidence across two passages)

CR paper

SST

Command word	Meaning
Analyse (how)	candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of, for example characterisation, narrative, symbolism, theme or to analyse a writer's use of language (word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, tone, punctuation, sound, etc)
Explain (how)	candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of key aspects, for example characterisation
Evaluate	candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of the effectiveness of text structure
Discuss	candidates are asked to show how the writer explores a given topic/theme, or uses a literary or linguistic technique, across more than one poem/short story, or a longer text in its entirety

CE

Command word	Meaning
Discuss how	These command words invite candidates to demonstrate their skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation. The expression 'with reference to appropriate techniques' serves as a reminder for candidates of the need to demonstrate skills of analysis. The language questions ask candidates to identify and refer to 'specific examples' of language from their studies in this genre
Explain how	

Modern Languages

Modern Languages SQA Command Words

Here is a table showing some of the command words that are used in the exams. When you go through past paper questions you will see these questions being frequently used.

Command word	Meaning
Complete	You must fill in the blanks (usually a one-word response) based on what you have listened to or read. It is also seen when you are being instructed to fill in a table based on what you have read or listened to. For example, Berlin is the best city for people who have a _____ (1) (2019 N5 paper)
Give details	Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description. Often it can be answered with a phrase, or sentence from the text. If the question asks you to state, give, or write down one (or two etc) examples then you should write down as many examples that are in line with marks awarded (2 marks requires 2 examples.)
State	Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description. Often it can be answered with a single word, phrase, or sentence. If the question asks you to state, give, or write down one (or two etc) examples. You should write down as many examples that are in line with marks awarded (2 marks requires 2 examples.)
Justify	You must give reasons to support their suggestions or conclusions. Reread the text and affirm what you believe the writer is trying to convey. <i>"I believe the authors over all purpose is ..."</i> State your point, evidence must be taken from what you have read and analyse. PEA
Consider the text as whole	you must give reasons to support their suggestions or conclusions. State your point, evidence must be taken from what you have read and analyse. PEA
Example	Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description. Often it can be answered with a single word, phrase or sentence. If the question asks you to state, give, or write down one (or two etc) examples. You should write down as many examples that are in line with marks awarded (2 marks requires 2 examples.)
Describe	This command word wants you to explain what you have read in your words. Reread the passage and write your answer in English. If the question asks you to describe 1 (or more) examples, then you must write down evidence for the number of points available. For example, Re-read lines 1–4. 1. Describe how the waiter reacts to families with children who arrive at his restaurant. (2) (2019 ADH)

Tick the correct boxes	You must only put a tick in the box. You may not tick more than the points allocated. If it is a two-mark question then you must only put a tick in two boxes. Any more and you will not receive any marks for this question even if you have ticked the correct boxes. i. There is an open-air cinema on a beach in Valencia. What does the article say about this? Tick the two correct statements. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>It opens on the 28th August.</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Every day you can see a different film.</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>There are fifty chairs.</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>The films are free.</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> </table> (N5 2017)	It opens on the 28 th August.		Every day you can see a different film.		There are fifty chairs.		The films are free.			
It opens on the 28 th August.											
Every day you can see a different film.											
There are fifty chairs.											
The films are free.											
According to	If the question starts with according to, then you should pay particular attention to the details in the text. Keep your answers as close as possible to the translation whilst using natural sounding English.										

Drama

Command word	Meaning
State	give the answer e.g. <i>State the structure of your drama = Linear</i>
Explain	give an example/demonstrate your knowledge

	<i>e.g. Explain the structure of your drama = My drama is a linear structure because the action unfolds from beginning to end with no jumps in time.</i>
Describe	give specific details <i>e.g Describe the structure of your drama = My drama is a linear structure as the action unfolds from beginning to end. We start by seeing the Clare (the main character) being bullied. The rest of the drama follows Clare's journey to stop the bullying and being confident in who she is.</i>
Justify	give a reason or example <i>e.g. Justify the structure of your drama = My drama is a linear structure because I thought it would be important to follow the stages of Clare's story from beginning to end as it would be more meaningful for the audience to see the process she goes through to stop being bullied. At the start Clare is unconfident and being bullied and by the end she has new found confidence and friends again.</i>
Evaluate	you must give specific examples of what you (or someone else) did which was OR was not effective. These questions will always be worth 4 or more marks. For every mark you should put a bullet point explaining what you did well and WHY this was effective.

Home Economics

Command word	Meaning
List	Equipment for a recipe
Describe	How you would line a Swiss roll tin
Explain	Why you store ingredients in certain places
Evaluate	The colour ,texture , appearance of a lemon meringue pie

Physical Education

Portfolio

Command word	Meaning
Identify	NAME IT! Word or phrase required for one mark <i>A general observation schedule, a Preparation, action and recovery sheet. A personal performance wheel.</i>

Describe	LIST IT! Who / where / when / how? 1 mark for each descriptive point made Play the video: if I am watching a YouTube clip -, what would I see? Could someone else carry out your data collection method or training approach based on the description provided? <i>I used my general observation schedule to record my game of badminton. I played against someone with similar ability to me. (1 mark)</i>
Explain	Factor, Context, and Impact required to access 1 mark. <i>If I have good agility in badminton, I am able to reach the corner of the court quickly and easily giving me time to decide which effective shot I will play when returning the shuttle. (1 mark) - section 1</i> <i>I made the decision to do a 40 minute practice session instead of 10 minutes because this will help me develop my game skills faster as I am doing more in the session. This meant I will achieve my goal of increasing my long pass accuracy faster. (1 mark)</i>
Evaluate	Identify, Judgement, and Value required to access 1 mark. Each point of evaluation must identify an aspect of performance, make a judgment of the aspect within performance and the value of its impact on performance. <i>I am much better at transferring weight during the action phase which means pushing my high serves to the back of the court more often. (1 mark)</i>
Justify	CURRENT PERFORMANCE / ACTION / REASON Each point identify current performance level, provide an action (approach) to address the issue identified and a reason for using this action (approach)