

Assessment in IGCSE Mathematics

Session 2: Handout 2.10

Command words - What answer do you expect?

Some command words require drawings, plots, readings, numeric answers, approximations, algebraic terms, etc. The understanding of command words is an essential part of students' exam preparations.

1. Make a list of the different command words that you would expect to see on a mathematics exam paper.
2. When is the word 'hence' used in questions?
3. Which command words may have more than one meaning?
4. What is the difference between the command words 'construct' and 'draw or sketch'?
5. What is the difference between the command word 'simplify' and the command word 'solve'?
6. Do your students understand these command words? If not, how would you make sure that they do?

Additional task

Take a copy of a recent 0580 Paper 3 or 4 and analyse it for command words. Which of the command words are most commonly used?

For development

Students to develop a command word dictionary with terms used and their meanings as part of exam preparations in school.