Command words

List
- Very basic skill – asking you to simply remember items and write them in the form of a list – no need to go in to detail.

State
- Write what you are asked about in a clear, simple and 'to the point' way; no need to explain, unless you think that what you've written isn't clear.

Give
- Very straight forward – just outline your points briefly.

Outline
- Just give the main features or general idea.

Define
- This mainly tests your memory. Here you need to give the specific meaning of words, terms, etc.

Describe
- You just need to tell what it is - imagine and give information that paints a complete picture. Think of it as the next step on from 'list' or 'state'.

GCSE

Advice for Effective Revision

How to answer exam questions

Every exam question will use one or more command word.

These command words tell you what the examiner is asking you to do and give you guidance on how you should answer the question. If the question has two command words, this means that you are being asked to do two specific things; if you only respond to one command word then you would not be awarded full marks as the marks available would have been split between the two things that are required in order to answer it.

NORTHGATE
High School

Command words

Examine
- Look closely at something and discuss in order to come to a conclusion.

Explain
- Give reasons for how or why something happens. You need to give examples. Explain questions normally carry lots of marks.

Identify
- Pick out/select/find/highlight.

Illustrate
- Give examples that make your point clear.

Justify
- Give a reason to support an argument/give an explanation for something.

Function
- What does it do?

Command words

Analyse
- Give reasons why or how something is done and the effect of that. P.E.E point, evidence, explain.

Argue
- Put forward a point of view in a structured and reasoned way. Usually one sided but looks at others point of view.

Combine
- Put together...

Contrast
- Used with compare, look at the differences of 2 or more things.

Develop
- Go beyond and expand something, take it forward and add detail.

Discuss
- Give the main reasons for and against and draw conclusions.