

Command words

Command words are the words and phrases used in exams and other assessment tasks that tell students how they should answer the question.

The following command words are taken from Ofqual's official list. Their meanings are relevant to this subject. We've added our own command words and their meanings to complement Ofqual's list. Examples of the command words from across the three exam papers are also included.

Assess

Make an informed judgement.

Example questions

Paper 1

Assess the extent to which tropical storms have effects on people and the environment. Use Figure 5 and an example you have studied. [9 marks] (2018)

Assess the importance of inaccessibility and extreme temperatures as challenges to development in one of the following environments. Hot desert environment/cold environment. Use a case study and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2021)

Assess the benefits of using hard engineering and soft engineering to reduce the risk of river flooding. Use Figure 16 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Assess the importance of managing transport as part of urban sustainability. [6 marks] (2020)

Assess the extent of the challenges created by urban growth in LICs/NEEs. Use a case study of a city in an LIC/NEE. [9 marks] (2021)

Paper 3

For one of your fieldwork enquiries, assess the extent to which the accuracy of the results and the reliability of the conclusions could be improved. [9 marks] (2018)

Assess the usefulness of measures of central tendency, such as median, mean and mode, in analysing the housing quality data collected by the students. [4 marks] (2019)

Assess the effectiveness of your data collection method(s). [6 marks] (2020)

Calculate

Work out the value of something.

Example questions

Paper 1

Using Figure 21, calculate the mean maximum height of the 6 drumlins. [1 mark] (2020)

Using Figure 7, calculate the temperature range in Place A. [1 mark] (2020)

Using Figure 6, calculate the mean global forest loss from 2011 to 2017. Give your answer to one decimal place. [1 mark] (2021)

Paper 2

Calculate the median life expectancy shown in Figure 8. [2 marks] (2020)

Calculate the percentage of Guatemala's GNI that comes from payments sent home by people who have migrated to the USA. Answer to the nearest whole %. [1 mark] (2021)

Calculate the mean rate of growth per hour for the Asian cities shown in Figure 1. Answer to the nearest whole number. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

What is the total environmental quality score for the area shown in Figure 8? [1 mark] (2018)

Calculate the temperature range for Manaus. [1 mark] (2019)

Compare

Identify similarities and differences.

Example questions

Paper 1

Using Figure 11, compare two features of destructive and constructive waves. [2 marks] (2019)

Using Figure 17, compare the maximum depth of ice over the British Isles with the maximum depth of ice over Scandinavia. [1 mark] (2022)

Paper 2

Compare the distribution of the 10 highest and 10 lowest urban areas shown in Figure 5. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

Compare levels of access to piped water in urban and rural areas shown in Figure 2. [2 marks] (2020)

Using Figure 10, compare the proportion of charity shops between the three town centres. [4 marks] (2021)

Complete/Draw/Label

Finish the task by adding to given information.

Example questions

Paper 1

Using Figure 3, complete the following paragraph. [3 marks] (2019)

Most tropical storms happen between latitudes 5 degrees and 30 degrees north and south of the _____. On average, three or more tropical storms per year take place in the East Pacific and _____. In the Caribbean the main months for tropical storms are between _____.

Paper 2

Draw a best fit line on Figure 13. [1 mark] (2022)

Plot the following data on to Figure 12. [1 mark] (2022)

Complete Figure 4 using the following data. [1 mark] (2022)

Paper 3

Complete the pie chart below to show the results of Question 2 in the questionnaire (Figure 4). [1 mark] (2020)

Complete Figure 7 by adding the following information. Bus 20% Car 40% [1 mark] (2021)

Use Figure 5 to complete the following table, which was used to analyse the students' data. [3 marks] (2022)

Describe

Set out characteristics.

Example questions

Paper 1

Using Figure 3, describe the link between air pressure and surface winds. [2 marks] (2021)

Using Figure 11, describe how the rate of erosion changes from north to south. [1 mark] (2022)

Using Figure 7, describe changes in tropical primary forest loss between 2002 and 2018. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Describe the distribution of the countries which had 75–100% access to electricity as shown in Figure 15. [2 marks] (2020)

Describe the distribution of the cities shown in Figure 1. [2 marks] (2021)

Describe one or more impacts that international aid has had on a named LIC/NEE country. [4 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

Describe the trend in the rate of recycling in England between 2000–2019. [2 marks] (2022)

Using map evidence, describe the physical geography of the area surrounding the proposed incinerator development. [2 marks] (2022)

Discuss

Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.

Example questions

Paper 1

Discuss the costs and benefits of soft engineering strategies in protecting coastlines. Use Figure 10 and Figure 11 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2021)

Discuss how flood management strategies may have impacts on people and the environment. Use Figure 14 and an example you have studied. [6 marks] (2021)

Discuss the challenges and opportunities for development in either a hot desert environment or a cold environment. Use either Figure 9 or Figure 10 and a case study. [9 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Discuss the challenges of managing water quality and pollution in the UK. Use Figure 10 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2019)

'Tropical rainforests are important at both the local and global scales.' Discuss this statement. [6 marks] (2020)

Discuss the challenges of the changing demand for water in the UK. Use Figure 11 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

The use of renewable energy will help to manage climate change.' Discuss this statement. [6 marks] (2021)

'Managing waste is both an economic and an environmental issue.' Discuss this statement. [6 marks] (2022)

Evaluate

Judge from available evidence.

Example questions

Paper 1

Using a named example, evaluate the immediate and long-term responses to tropical storms. [9 marks, AO1, AO2 and AO3] (SAMs 3)

Paper 2

Using a case study of a LIC/NEE, evaluate the effects of economic development on the population's quality of life. [9 marks] (2019)

Evaluate the success or likely success of one or more strategies to resolve regional differences in the UK. [9 marks] (2020)

Explain

Set out purposes or reasons.

Example questions

Paper 1

Explain how living in areas that are at risk from a tectonic hazard(s) may have both advantages and disadvantages. [6 marks] (2021)

Explain how ecotourism can be a sustainable management strategy in tropical rainforests. [2 marks] (2022)

Explain how a meander may be formed by both erosion and deposition. Use one or more diagrams to support your answer. [4 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Explain how one country's trading relationships with the wider world have changed. Use Figure 7 and an LIC/NEE you have studied. [4 marks] (2021)

Explain how urban planning is improving quality of life for the urban poor. Use Figure 2 and an LIC/NEE example you have studied. [6 marks] (2022)

Explain how changing demand for food has affected the UK's carbon footprint. [4 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

Explain why the chosen location was suitable for the collection of data. [2 marks] (2018)

'Large scale wind energy projects are a suitable option for the Isle of Lewis.' Do you agree with this statement? Yes or No? Use evidence from the resources booklet and your own understanding to explain your answer. [9 marks] (2021)

Waste should be seen as 'a resource opportunity rather than a problem'. Do you agree? Explain your answer. [6 marks] (2022)

Identify/Name/State/Give/Define

Produce an answer from recall/Express in clear terms/Name or otherwise characterise.

Example questions

Paper 1

State two ways that planning might help to reduce the damaging effects of an earthquake or a volcanic eruption. [2 marks] (2021)

Using Figure 5, name the continent with the largest area of savanna. [1 mark] (2022)

Using Figure 12, give one reason why the rate of erosion of the Holderness coast is high. [1 mark] (2022)

Paper 2

Using Figure 7, which trading group in South America has the most member countries? [1 mark] (2021)

Give one way in which a major city in an LIC/NEE is regionally important. [1 mark] (2022)

Give two impacts of energy insecurity. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

Identify one potential risk in your physical geography fieldwork and explain how the risk was reduced. [3 marks] (2019)

Give one reason why managing waste is a global issue. [1 mark] (2022)

Using the data from Figure 4, state two conclusions that the student might draw about the impact of tourism. [2 marks] (2022)

Justify

Support a case with evidence.

Example questions

Paper 2

Social and economic changes in the UK rural landscape are: positive in an area of population growth, negative in an area of population decline. Do you agree? Justify your answer, using one or more examples. [9 marks] (2021)

Paper 3

Justify the use of one of the following in your human geography enquiry: ..maps ..photographs ..field sketches. [3 marks] (2020)

Which area shown in Figure 6 has the highest residential quality? Use the data in Figure 6 to justify your decision. [4 marks] (2022)

Outline

Set out main characteristics.

Example questions

Paper 1

Outline one reason why wildfires are a threat to global climate. [2 marks] (2020)

Using Figure 8, outline one environmental effect of deforestation. [2 marks] (2022)

Outline one way that planning can reduce the impact of tropical storms. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Outline how uneven development can cause international migration. [3 marks] (2021)

Outline one or more reasons for the link between GNI and water supply. [3 marks] (2022)

Outline one reason for the slower rates of growth in HIC cities. [2 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

Outline the conclusions that the students could make from the data (Figure 4). [2 marks] (2022)

Suggest

Present a possible case.

Example questions

Paper 1

Suggest why areas close to the Equator usually have high rainfall. Use Figure 3 and your own understanding. [2 marks] (2021)

Suggest one reason why the material deposited by a glacier is mixed in size and shape. [1 mark] (2022)

Suggest how plants are adapted to the climate in tropical rainforests. Use Figure 6 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

Suggest how energy insecurity can have both economic and environmental impacts. Use Figure 16a and Figure 16b and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2021)

Using Figure 9, suggest how population change in Stage 3 may have economic benefits. [3 marks] (2022)

Suggest how developments such as this can help urban areas to become more sustainable. Use Figure 3 and your own understanding. [4 marks] (2022)

Paper 3

For one of your fieldwork enquiries, suggest how anomalies in your data could affect your fieldwork enquiry. [2 marks] (2020)

Suggest two ways that the primary data collection methods could be adapted to give more reliable data. [2 marks] (2022)

Suggest why the government's aim to recycle 65% of waste by 2035 may not be met.) [4 marks] (2022)

To what extent

Judge the importance or success of (strategy, scheme, project, etc).

Example questions

Paper 1

To what extent is human activity the cause of desertification in areas on the fringes of hot deserts? or To what extent are cold environments at risk from economic development, and therefore in need of protection? [9 marks] (2019)

To what extent is climate change the result of human actions? Use Figure 4 and your own understanding. [9 marks] (2021)

To what extent do the effects of a tectonic hazard vary between areas of contrasting wealth? Use one or more named examples in your answer. [9 marks] (2022)

Paper 2

To what extent has urban change created environmental challenges in a UK city you have studied? [9 marks] (2018)

To what extent has urban change created social and economic opportunities in a UK city you have studied? [9 marks] (2019)

‘Aid is the best way to reduce the development gap.’ To what extent do you agree? Use Figure 8 and your own understanding. [6 marks] (2021)

Paper 3

To what extent can the student draw reliable conclusions from the data? [4 marks] (2020)

For one of your fieldwork enquiries, to what extent did your results and conclusions meet the original aim of your enquiry? [9 marks] (2020)

‘All types of renewable energy generation can create environmental challenges.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement? [6 marks] (2021)