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IPMA Qualifications

Command words

Command Words

Candidates must become familiar with the definition of different command words which will be used in assessments.

A command verb itself is simply an instruction to do something. Command words can be categorised into higher order (or more challenging) words and lower order (or less challenging) words. Higher order words will be used in levels A, B and C with lower order words being used in level D.

Below are the definitions of command words grouped by category. You must become familiar with these words if they are to provide the required depth of response to an assessment.

Higher Order Words

Command verb	Definition
Address	To deal with a situation or problem.
Analyse	Separate information into components and identify characteristics.
Assess	Offer a reasoned judgement of the standard/quality of a situation or skill informed by relevant facts.
Categorise	To put 'things' into groups based on similar features/characteristics.
Classify	As for categorise
Clarify	To make something clearer or easier to understand.
Compare	Identify similarities and differences such as advantages/disadvantages/strengths/weaknesses.
Differentiate	Recognise or determine what makes something different.
Distinguish	Notice and present differences between models/theories/concepts/contexts/solutions.
Justify	Present a reasoned case for actions or decisions made.
Illustrate	Make clear an analysis by using examples or providing diagrams.
Recommend	Give possible alternatives or put forward an idea or plan which could be implemented.
Suggest	As for recommend.

Lower Order Words

Command verb	Definition
Discuss	Write about (a topic) taking into account different concepts or ideas.
Explain	To give account of the purposes or reasons.
Describe	Give an account, including all the relevant characteristics, qualities and events.
Indicate	Point out, show.
Show how	Demonstrate the application of certain methods/theories/concepts.