

Command Words Explained

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6. Using information, data and graphs

Command words are words used in GCSE Maths exam questions. They tell you exactly what you need to do to answer a question and get the marks.

Command word	What does it mean?
Use the data to ...	Use the numbers or information provided in the question.
Use the graph to ...	Read your answer from the graph.
Does the data support this statement?	Check the data and explain whether the statement is reasonable.
Estimate the mean	Use class midpoints and frequencies to find an approximate mean.
What does this tell you about ...?	Explain what the result means.
How does this affect ...?	Explain what changes when something in the question changes.
Is your answer sensible?	Check whether your answer makes sense.
Use your calculator	Use a calculator to find the answer.
Do not use a graphical method	Solve using algebra, not by drawing or reading a graph.
Show how the data supports a hypothesis (Higher)	Use calculations or statistics to support the statement.

Test yourself

Challenge A – Choose the Correct Answer

What does "How does this affect ...?" mean?

- Explain what changes when something else changes.
- Find the exact answer.
- Draw a graph.

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What does "Show how the data supports a hypothesis" mean?

- a. Copy the hypothesis.
- b. Use calculations or statistics to support the statement.
- c. Give a personal opinion without using the data.

Challenge B – Match the Meaning

Match each exam instruction to its meaning.

- ☐ Use the graph to ...
- ☐ Use the data to ...
- ☐ Estimate the mean
- ☐ Is your answer sensible?
- ☐ Does the data support this statement?

- A. Check whether the answer makes sense.
- B. Use the information given in the question.
- C. Read the answer from the graph.
- D. Use the data to decide whether a statement is reasonable.
- E. Use class midpoints and frequencies to find an approximate mean.

Challenge C – True or False?

"Use your calculator" means you must show every button pressed. ____

"Do not use a graphical method" means you should use another method, such as algebra. ____

"What does this tell you about ...?" means explain what the result means. ____