
Glossary of IB command terms

The command terms listed are used to define the thinking skills that IB MYP and DP students are expected to demonstrate. The definitions may vary when used in other contexts.

Command terms	MYP definitions
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure. To identify parts and relationships, and to interpret information to reach conclusions.
Annotate	Add brief notes to a diagram or graph.
Apply	Use knowledge and understanding in response to a given situation or real circumstances.
Appraise	Evaluate, judge or consider text or a piece of work.
Argue	Challenge or debate an issue or idea with the purpose of persuading or committing someone else to a particular stance or action.
Calculate	Obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working.
Classify	Arrange or order by class or category.
Comment	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Compare	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and contrast	Give an account of the similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Construct	Develop information in a diagrammatic or logical form.
Contrast	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Deduce	Reach a conclusion from the information given.
Define	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.
Demonstrate	Prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application.
Derive	Manipulate a mathematical relationship to give a new equation or relationship.
Describe	Give a detailed account or picture of a situation, event, pattern or process.
Design	Produce a plan, simulation or model.

Command terms	MYP definitions
Determine	Obtain the only possible answer.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Distinguish	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.
Document	Credit sources of information used by referencing (or citing) following one recognized referencing system. References should be included in the text and also at the end of the piece of work in a reference list or bibliography.
Estimate	Find an approximate value for an unknown quantity.
Evaluate	Assess the implications and limitations; make judgments about the ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to selected criteria.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
Exemplify	Represent with an example.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Explore	Undertake a systematic process of discovery.
Formulate	Express precisely and systematically the relevant concept(s) or argument(s).
Identify	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities. Recognize and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.
Infer	Deduce; reason from premises to a conclusion. Listen or read beyond what has been literally expressed.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information.
Investigate	Observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.
Justify	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Label	Add title, labels or brief explanation(s) to a diagram or graph.
List	Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation.
Measure	Find the value for a quantity.
Outline	Give a brief account.
Predict	Give an expected result of an upcoming action or event.
Present	Offer for display, observation, examination or consideration.

Command terms	MYP definitions
Prove	Use a sequence of logical steps to obtain the required result in a formal way.
Recall	Remember or recognize from prior learning experiences.
Reflect	Think about deeply; consider.
Recognize	Identify through patterns or features.
Show	Give the steps in a calculation or derivation.
Sketch	Represent by means of a diagram or graph (labelled as appropriate). The sketch should give a general idea of the required shape or relationship, and should include relevant features.
Solve	Obtain the answer(s) using appropriate methods.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.
Suggest	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.
Summarize	Abstract a general theme or major point(s).
Synthesize	Combine different ideas in order to create new understanding.
Use	Apply knowledge or rules to put theory into practice.