Command Terms for IB Economics Examinations

IB Economics: www.ibdeconomics.com

COMMAND TERMS

Knowing the command terms enables the student to present their answers to examination questions in a way that meets the requirements of the question (for example, the answer to a 'Define' question is a little different to that of an 'Explain' question, which is very, very different to the answer required for a 'Discuss' question.

COMMAND TERMS – YOUR GUIDE HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR ANSWERS IN EXAMINATIONS

IB Economics command terms in an IB Economics exam

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in the syllabus content and in examination questions.

Command terms need to be understood by students and taught be teachers. There are specific areas in the mark schemes that require examiners to penalise students for not answering the question in the appropriate manner.

Although these terms will be used frequently in exam questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way. Thus, we have the first commandment of IB Economics: **Thou shalt know thy command terms**. The second commandment of IB Economics is: **Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate**. Do this for all of the Level 3 command terms. Establish and provide balanced evaluation of two sides of an argument, followed by a judgment. Always.

THE IB ECONOMICS COMMAND TERMS:

Level 1: Knowledge and understanding	
Term	**Definition**
Define	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity. Define the term *income elasticity of demand*.
Describe	Give a detailed account. Describe the relationship between price and quantity demanded,
List	Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation. List four key determinants of demand.
Outline	Give a brief account or summary. Outline one advantage and one disadvantage of a tariff.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation. State the reason why quantity demanded will decrease.
Level 2: Application and analysis	
Term	**Definition**
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure. Analyse the impact of an appreciation in the exchange rate.
Apply	Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in relation to a given problem or issue. Apply the concept of price elasticity of demand to a firm's objective of maximising total revenues.
Comment	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation. Comment on whether the firm should increase the price of good X.
Distinguish	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items. Distinguish between monetary and fiscal policy.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes. Explain why quantity demanded decreases as price increases.
Suggest	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer. Suggest a suitable method to decrease aggregate demand.

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Level 3: Synthesis and evaluation	
Term	**Definition**
Compare	**Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.** Compare price ceilings and price floors.
Compare and contrast	**Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.** Compare and contrast price ceilings and price floors.
Contrast	**Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.** Contrast price ceilings and price floors.
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.** Discuss the impact of a government imposing tariffs on imports into the country.
Evaluate	**Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.** Evaluate the view that the benefits of economic growth will always outweigh the costs.
Examine	**Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.** Examine the government's decision to use fiscal policy to stimulate economic growth.
Justify	**Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.** Justify the decision to remove barriers to trade.
To what extent	**Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.** The rate of inflation is most effectively controlled through monetary policy. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
Level 4: Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques.	
Term	**Definition**
Calculate	**Obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working.** Calculate the PED of product A.
Construct	**Display information in a diagrammatic or logical form.**

	Using the information provided, construct the demand schedule for product A.
Derive	**Manipulate a mathematical relationship to give a new equation or relationship.** Using the information provided, derive the demand function.
Determine	**Obtain the only possible answer.** Determine the equilibrium price for product A.
Draw	**Represent by means of a labelled, accurate diagram or graph, using a pencil. A ruler (straight edge) should be used for straight lines. Diagrams should be drawn to scale. Graphs should have points correctly plotted (if appropriate) and joined in a straight line or smooth curve.** Draw the effects of an increase in price on Product A.
Identify	**Provide an answer from a number of possibilities** Identify the slope of the demand curve.
Label	**Add labels to a diagram.** Label the above diagram.
Measure	**Obtain a value for a quantity.** Measure the change in quantity demanded.
Plot	**Mark the position of points on a diagram.** Plot the demand curve from the information above.
Show	**Give the steps in a calculation or derivation.** Show the equilibrium price in the market.
Show that	**Obtain the required result (possibly using information given) without the formality of proof. "Show that" questions do not generally require the use of a calculator.** Using the demand function: $Qd = 90 - 5P$, show that the quantity demanded decreases as 'a' decreases from 90 to 70.
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.** Sketch an increase in demand.
Solve	**Obtain the answer(s) using algebraic and/or numerical and/or graphical methods.** Using the information provided, solve for the equilibrium market price and quantity demanded.