

Command words (specific mathematical meaning)

Some of these command words will be in your exam. Make sure you read the full question in your exam.

Estimate

Check, without a calculator, the result of a calculation by using suitable approximations.

OR

Give a reasonable numeric value that can be justified by the information in the question.

Construct

Use mathematical instruments to draw accurately. Geometric instruments may be specified in the question. When constructing with compasses and a straight edge, show all of the arcs and lines that you use to make the construction.

Shade

Indicate, on a graph or a drawing, a region according to given conditions.

Enlarge, Rotate, Reflect, Translate

Carry out the requested transformation.

Expand, Multiply out

Multiply to remove brackets from a given expression to obtain an equivalent.

Factorise

Simplify a given expression by writing it as a product of two or more factors.

Rearrange

Used with formulae, when students are requested to change the subject of a formula.

Round

Write values correct to the specific accuracy required.

Simplify

Make a given algebraic expression/fraction/ratio as simple as possible.

Solve by

Use the method specified in the question to solve an equation or inequality.

Write... in the form...

Manipulate a given algebraic expression/fraction/ratio into the specified form or provide an answer in a particular way e.g. when giving an exact answer as a surd.

N.B. Other words that are commonly used in English are used with their standard English meaning.