Glossary of command terms

This glossary of command terms provides a list of terms commonly used across the Victorian Curriculum   
F–10, VCE study designs and VCE examinations.

The glossary can be used by:

* teachers across Foundation to Level 10 and VCE to develop internal assessment tasks and prepare students for tests and examinations
* examination panels in the development of assessment items for external examinations.

The glossary may be used in classrooms by teachers across all F–10 curriculum areas and VCE studies to help students better understand the requirements of command terms in the context of their discipline. Students may benefit from using the glossary in the context of questions and tasks they are working on as opposed to learning the terms in isolation.

It is important that the command terms are not interpreted in an overly prescriptive way. Teachers are reminded that study-specific nuances may elicit different kinds of responses to a given term as the term may carry a particular meaning within a discipline that is not necessarily represented in the glossary. For example, an 'evaluate' question will require a different response in Mathematics than it will in History.

The list of terms in the glossary is not intended to be exhaustive or limiting; other terms may be used if required and/or appropriate, allowing study-specific questions to be constructed. Additionally, not all terms in the glossary will be suitable for use in all disciplines and studies. Reference to the relevant curriculum and VCE study design is paramount when developing internal and external assessments.

When using command terms in the construction of assessment items, questions, tasks and marking rubrics, the following definitions may be useful in considering what the term requires students to do.

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| Term | Explanation |
| account of | Describe a series of events or transactions. |
| account for | State reasons for; report on. |
| analyse | Identify components/elements and the significance of the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications; determine logic and reasonableness of information. |
| apply | Use; employ in a particular situation or context. |
| assess | Make a judgment about, or measure, determine or estimate, the value, quality, outcomes, results, size, significance, nature or extent of something. |
| calculate | Determine from given facts, figures or information; obtain a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working; determine or find (e.g. a number, answer) by using mathematical processes. |
| clarify | Make a statement or situation more comprehensible. |
| compare | Recognise similarities and differences and the significance of these similarities and differences. |
| construct | Make, build, create or put together by arranging ideas or items (e.g. an argument, artefact or solution); display information in a diagrammatic or logical form. |
| contrast | Show how things are different or opposite. |
| deduce | Draw a conclusion from given information, data, a narrative, an argument, an opinion, a design and/or a plan. |
| define | Give the precise meaning and identify essential qualities of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity. |
| demonstrate | Show ideas, how something can be done or that something is true by using examples or practical applications, or by applying algorithms or formulas. |
| describe | Provide characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, opinion, situation, event, process, effect, argument, narrative, text, experiment, artwork, performance piece or other artefact in an accurate way. |
| discuss | Present a clear, considered and balanced argument or prose that identifies issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of, or points for and against, one or more arguments, concepts, factors, hypotheses, narratives and/or opinions. |
| distinguish | Make clear the differences between two or more arguments, concepts, opinions, narratives, artefacts, data points, trends and/or items. |
| evaluate | Ascertain the value or amount of; make a judgment using the information supplied, criteria and/or own knowledge and understanding to consider a logical argument and/or supporting evidence for and against different points, arguments, concepts, processes, opinions or other information. |
| examine | Consider an argument, concept, debate, data point, trend or artefact in a way that identifies assumptions, possibilities and interrelationships. |
| explain | Give a detailed account of why and/or how with reference to causes, effects, continuity, change, reasons or mechanisms; make the relationships between things evident. |
| extract | Select relevant and/or appropriate detail from an argument, issue or artefact. |
| extrapolate | Infer and/or extend information that may not be clearly stated from a narrative, opinion, graph or image by assuming existing trends will continue. |
| identify | Recognise and name and/or select an event, feature, ingredient, element, speaker and/or part from a list or extended narrative or argument, or within a diagram, structure, artwork or experiment. |
| infer | Derive conclusions from available information or evidence, or through reasoning, rather than through explicit statements. |
| interpret | Draw meaning from an argument, point of view, description or diagram, text, image or artwork and determine significance within context. |
| investigate | Observe, study or carry out an examination in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. |
| justify | Show, prove or defend, with reasoning and evidence, an argument, decision and/or point of view using given data and/or other information. |
| list | Provide a series of related words, names, numbers or items that are arranged consecutively. |
| name | Provide a word or term (something that is known and distinguished from other people or things) used to identify an object, person, thing, place etc. |
| outline | Provide an overview or the main features of an argument, point of view, text, narrative, diagram or image. |
| persuade | Induce (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument; convince. |
| predict | Give an expected result of an upcoming action or event; suggest what may happen based on available information. |
| propose | Suggest or put forward a point of view, idea, argument, diagram, plan and/or suggestion based on given data or stimulus material for consideration or action. |
| recall | Present remembered ideas, facts and/or experiences. |
| recommend | Put forward and/or approve (someone or something) as being suitable for a particular purpose or role. |
| recount | Retell a series of events or steps in a process, usually in order. |
| state | Give a specific name or value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation. |
| suggest | Put forward for consideration a solution, hypothesis, idea or other possible answer. |
| summarise | Retell concisely the relevant and major details of one or more arguments, text, narratives, methodologies, processes, outcomes and/or sequences of events. |
| synthesise | Combine various elements to make a whole or an overall point. |