Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Analyse	AO1, AO2 & AO3	1-7	Break something down into its components/parts. Examine each part methodically and in detail in order to discover the meaning or essential features of a theme, topic or situation. Explore the relationship between the features and how each one contributes to the topic.	Examine evidence and consider any meaningful outcomes that could be made in relation to the theme, topic or situation.	Candidates need to use evidence from the scenario, if present, to support the reasoning behind their decisions.
Assess (without scenario)	AO1 & AO3	8 or 20 (8 on IAS papers)	Give careful consideration to all the factors or events that apply and identify which are the most important or relevant. Make a judgement on the importance of something, and come to a conclusion where needed.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, linking this appropriately to a range of arguments for and against, considering their significance, and making appropriate judgements.	For 8 mark questions without a scenario, there are the same AO1 and AO3 marks available (4 AO1, 4 AO3). Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance in their response with a similar amount of AO1 and AO3 material. For 20 mark questions without a scenario, there are more AO3 marks available than AO1 (8 AO1, 12 AO3). Therefore, candidates should aim for an imbalance in their response with a greater amount of AO3 material than AO1.
Assess (with scenario)	AO1 & AO2 & AO3	16	Give careful consideration to all the factors or events that apply and identify which are the most important or relevant. Make a judgement on the importance of something, and come to a conclusion where needed.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, applying this to the scenario, and linking ideas appropriately to a range of arguments for and against considering their significance, and making appropriate judgements.	The amount of AO2 marks for an extended open response question with a scenario will always be capped at 4 marks, so for a 16 mark question with a scenario there are 6 AO1, 4 AO2, 6 AO3 available. Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance between their AO1 and AO3 material which should be of a greater amount than their AO2.

Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Calculate	AO2	1-7	Obtain a numerical answer, showing relevant working. If the answer has a unit, this must be included.	Use mathematical skills to obtain a numerical answer from a stimulus, showing all relevant working. Give the answer in the requested form (e.g. to one decimal place).	Candidates are advised to show all working when performing calculations.
Compare	AO1, AO3	2-7	Looking for the similarities and differences of two (or more) things. This should not require the drawing of a conclusion. The answer must relate to both (or all) things mentioned in the question. The answer must include at least one similarity and one difference.	One mark per explicit comparison. The answer must include at least one similarity and one difference for full credit to be possible.	Candidates should give both pieces of information and use connectives when writing their comparison points.
Complete	AO1 or AO2	1-7	To fill in/write all the details asked for.	Candidates to fill out information as directed in the question.	
Convert	AO2	1-7	Express a quantity in alternative units.	Change the original units provided into the specified units as directed in the question.	
Define	AO1 or AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Provide a definition of something.	Demonstrate accurate knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts in isolation (without scenario) or applied to a context (with scenario).	
Describe	AO1 or AO2	1-7, but typically 2 - 5 marks	To give an account of something. Statements in the response need to be developed as they are often linked but do not need to include a justification or reason.	Demonstrate accurate psychological knowledge and understanding in isolation (without scenario) or applied to a context (with scenario). No justification is required.	Elaboration is required. An alternative command word will be used (e.g. 'State' or 'Give') when elaboration is not required.

Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Determine	AO2	1-7, but typically 1 - 2 marks	The answer must have an element that is quantitative from the stimulus provided, or must show how the answer can be reached quantitatively. To gain maximum marks there must be a quantitative element to the answer.	Interpret quantitative information in an appropriate way.	
Discuss (always has a scenario or is on a key question or practical investigation)	AO1 & AO2	8	Explore the issue/situation/problem/argument that is being presented within the question, articulating different or contrasting viewpoints.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, then applying this in a relevant and appropriate way the scenario given. Does not require any judgements or conclusions to be made.	Candidates need a balance of AO1 and AO2 content as the marks available are 4 AO1, 4 AO2. The higher levels (level 3 and 4) require candidates to demonstrate an awareness of competing arguments for AO2.
Draw	AO2	1-7, but typically 3 marks	Produce an output, either by freehand or using a ruler (e.g. graph).	Use the answer space provided to draw whatever is requested in the question, such as a graph.	Candidates should be precise when drawing and label their diagrams where necessary with appropriate labels.
Evaluate (without scenario)	AO1 & AO3	8, 12, 16 or 20 (8, 12 or 16 on IAS papers)	Review information then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, linking this appropriately to a range of strengths and weaknesses considering their significance, making appropriate conclusions.	For 8 and 12 mark questions without a scenario, there are the same AO1 and AO3 marks available. Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance in their response with a similar amount of AO1 and AO3 material. For 16 and 20 mark questions without a scenario, there are more AO3 marks available (10/16 or 12/20) Therefore, candidates should aim for an imbalance in their response with a greater amount of AO3 material than AO1.

Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Evaluate (with scenario)	AO1 & AO2 & AO3	12 or 16	Review information then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, applying this to the scenario, linking this appropriately to a range of strengths and weaknesses considering their significance, making appropriate conclusions.	The amount of AO2 marks for an extended open response question with a scenario will always be capped at 4 marks. For a 12 mark question with a scenario there are 4 AO1, 4 AO2, 4 AO3 available. Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance between their AO1, AO2, and AO3 material. For a 16 mark question with a scenario there are 6 AO1, 4 AO2, 6 AO3 available. Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance between their AO1 and AO3 material which should be of a greater amount than their AO2.
Explain	AO1 & AO3 or AO2 & AO3	2, 4 or 6	An explanation that requires a justification/ exemplification of a point. The answer must contain some element of reasoning/ justification. This can include mathematical explanations.	Identify a relevant point (e.g. strength, weakness, conclusion, improvement) and then provide reasoning/justification for the chosen point. May be in isolation (AO1 and AO3) or in relation to a scenario or practical work (AO2 and AO3).	Always involves AO3 for reasoning/justification and candidates should also apply to the context if a scenario is given or the question is relation to their practical work.
Give	AO1 or AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Generally involves the recall of one or more pieces of information; when used in relation to a context, it is used to determine a candidate's grasp of the factual information presented.	Demonstrate accurate psychological knowledge and understanding.	Similar to 'state'. Elaboration of information is not required. If elaboration is required, an alternative command word will be used (e.g. Describe).

Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Identify	AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	This requires some key information to be selected from a given stimulus/resource.	Accurately select the relevant information as directed in the question from the scenario.	
Interpret	AO2 or AO3	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Recognise a trend or pattern(s) within a given stimulus/resource.	Accurately show understanding of evidence from a scenario.	
Justify	AO3 (often with AO1 or AO2)	2-7 marks	Rationalise a decision or action.	Identify a relevant point in relation to the scenario and then provide reasoning/justification for the chosen point.	Depending on the context of the question (for example the presence of a scenario) one or more marks may be available for knowledge (AO1) or application (AO2).
Name	AO1 or AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Generally involves the recall of one or more pieces of information; when used in relation to a context, it is used to determine a candidate's grasp of the factual information presented.	Demonstrate accurate psychological knowledge and understanding.	Similar to 'Give'. Elaboration of information is not required. If elaboration is required, an alternative command word will be used (e.g. Describe).
Plot	AO2	1-7, but typically 3 marks	Produce, or add detail to, a graph/chart by marking points accurately (e.g. line of best fit).	Use the answer space provided to plot whatever is requested in the question, such as a graph.	Similar to 'draw'.
Predict	AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Articulate an expected result.	Use psychological knowledge and understanding to propose an expected outcome in relation to a scenario.	
State	AO1 or AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Generally involves the recall of one or more pieces of information; when used in relation to a context, it is used to determine a candidate's grasp of the factual information presented.	Demonstrate accurate psychological knowledge and understanding.	Similar to 'Give'. Elaboration of information is not required. If elaboration is required, an alternative command word will be used (e.g. Describe).

Taxonomy (Command) Words used in Edexcel IAL/IAS Level Psychology

Command word	AOs assessed	Marks available	Specification definition (from Appendix 9)	Guidance	Additional notes
Suggest	AO1 & AO2	1-7, but typically 1 or 2 marks	Make a proposal/propose an idea in written form.	Demonstrate relevant psychological knowledge and understanding applied to a scenario.	
To what extent (without scenario)	AO1 & AO3	12	Review information then bring it together to form a judgement conclusion, following the provision of a balanced and reasoned argument.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, linking this appropriately to a range of arguments for and against considering their significance, making appropriate judgements/decisions.	For 12 mark questions without a scenario, there are the same AO1 and AO3 marks available (6 AO1, 6 AO3). Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance in their response with a similar amount of AO1 and AO3 material.
To what extent (with scenario)	AO1 & AO2 & AO3	16 or 20 (16 on IAS papers)	Review information then bring it together to form a judgement conclusion, following the provision of a balanced and reasoned argument.	Demonstrate accurate and thorough psychological knowledge and understanding, applying this to the scenario, linking this appropriately to a range of arguments for and against considering their significance, making appropriate judgements/decisions.	The amount of AO2 marks for an extended open response question with a scenario will always be capped at 4 marks. For a 16 or 20 mark question with a scenario there are 6 AO1, 4 AO2, 6 AO3 or 8 AO1, 4 AO2, 8 AO3 available. Therefore, candidates should aim for a balance between their AO1 and AO3 material which should be of a greater amount than their AO2.