

IB Command Terms – Categorized by Skill Level

(For an explanation of this document visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g88IA57xu8>)

Command Term	Skill Level	Typical Marks per Question	IB Level Attained Upon Mastery	Definition	Business Management Example
Define	1	2	4	Give a clear and precise meaning of a given word, term or concept	Define the term “stakeholder”
Describe	1	2	4	Present the characteristics of a particular topic	Describe Company X’s corporate culture
Identify	1	2	4	Recognize and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.	Identify two reasons why the owner has chosen a particular method of investment appraisal.
Classify*	1	2	4	Arrange or order by class or categories.	Classify the range of products sold by line range and mix.
Complete*	1	2	4	Add missing information/data.	Complete the critical path diagram by calculating the earliest starting time and latest finishing time for each activity.
Outline*	1	2	4	Give a brief explanation and/or summary of the issues, principles, or arguments stated in the question.	Outline two advantages and disadvantages of working from home.

Tip 1

Define, Explain, Analyse, ‘Distinguish between’ and ‘Outline’ require no evaluation.

Evaluate, Assess, Discuss, To what extent, Examine do require evaluation

Compare	2	4	5	Describe two (or more) situations and present the similarities between them.	Compare the benefits of adopting LIFO with those of FIFO.
Contrast	2	4	5	Describe two (or more) situations and present the differences between them.	With reference to the impact on profit, contrast the FIFO method of stock valuation with the LIFO method of stock valuation.
Distinguish	2	4	5	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts/terms.	Distinguish between variable costs and fixed costs.
Explain	2	4	5	Describe, giving reasons.	Explain why company X has changed its pricing strategy.
Calculate*	2	4	5	Give a precise numerical answer.	Calculate the acid test ratio for company X in 2008.
Comment*	2	4	5	Write an explanation of, or commentary on, the information given in relation to a problem or issue.	Comment on the profitability, liquidity and efficiency of the firm.
Construct*	2	4	5	Present a variety of information in a diagrammatic or tabular form.	Based on the information given, construct a break-even chart for company X.
Prepare*	2	4	5	Put given data or information into a suitable business format.	Prepare a cash-flow forecast for company X for January, February and March 2010.

Analyse	3	6	6	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements, structure, any underlying assumptions and any interrelationships involved.	Analyse the impact of external opportunities and threats on the business strategy of company A.
Examine	3	6	6	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.	Examine company X's present marketing approach in the light of changes in the external environment.
Apply*	3	6	6	Use an idea, principle or theory in relation to a problem or issue.	Applying Maslow's motivation theory, suggest a new rewards package for employees of company X.
Formulate*	3	6	6	Express precisely, clearly and in a systematic manner the relevant concept(s) or argument(s).	Formulate an appropriate promotional mix for company X.
Interpret*	3	6	6	Use knowledge and understanding to explain and, where appropriate, draw inferences from a given situation, problem or issue.	(Calculate and) interpret the value of the sales variance for XYZ Ltd.

Discuss	4	8	7	Offer a considered and balanced review of a particular topic. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by empirical evidence and sound argument.	Discuss how the introduction of an employee share-ownership scheme could affect motivation for employees of company X.
Evaluate	4	8	7	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations of different evidence and arguments.	Evaluate the option of accelerating company X's overseas development through the use of franchising or joint ventures.
Justify	4	8	7	Provide evidence to support or defend a choice, decision, strategy or course of action.	Justify your reasons for introducing an extension strategy for product X.
To what extent	4	8	7	Evaluate the success or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with empirical evidence and sound argument.	To what extent was the marketing strategy of company X successful?
Advise*	4	8	7	Offer suggestions/recommendations for a potential course of action.	Advise the human resources manager on the use of both monetary and non-monetary rewards to improve staff motivation at XYZ Ltd.
Recommend*	4	8	7	Recommend a suitable growth strategy for company X.	Recommend a suitable growth strategy for company X.

* Command term specific to Business Management course

Thanks to Mr. Shane Maika of Canadian International School of Hong Kong and Mr. Paul Hoang of Sha Tin College for sharing this table.

Top band descriptors from 2009 and 2010 mark schemes:

Explain (Level 2)

- The response exhibits an accurate, specific, well-detailed explanation of the relevant issue(s) and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the topic
- There is an appropriate use of the appropriate terminology throughout the response.
- Relevant examples from the case study are given to support explanations within the response.

Analyse/Examine (Level 3)

- A balanced analysis/examination with accurate, specific, well-detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant issues, concepts, and theories.
- An analysis/examination that uses appropriate terminology throughout the response.
- Explicit references are made to the information in the stimulus material.

Discuss/Evaluate/To What Extent/Recommend (Level 4)*

- A response with accurate, specific, well-detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant issues, concepts, and theories.
- A response that uses appropriate terminology competently throughout the response.
- A response that includes judgments and/or conclusions that is well supported and underpinned by a balanced analysis.
- Explicit references to the information in the stimulus material are made throughout the response.

***For an effective strategy on how to answer an 'evaluate' question please visit Ms. Leena Palekar's post**

<http://www.tutor2u.net/blog/index.php/ib-diploma/comments/tips-to-write-evaluative-answers-the-inverted-y-model/>

