SKILLS GUIDANCE

WHY HAVE THIS SECTION?

One of the main reasons students do not achieve the marks they hoped to achieve is because they do not understand what the question is asking. Often a question does not just ask for information on a topic but rather it requires information provided in a particular way. For instance, it may require a discussion of a topic or a break-down of the main points. Frequently, a question needs the positive and negative aspects of a topic rather than general points in an answer. It is therefore important that you appreciate how the information must be provided.

The importance of command words

Each AC in every unit has a command word at the start of the heading. The following table has examples from each unit.

| Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
AC1.1 **Analyse** different types of crime	AC1.1 **Compare** criminal behaviour and deviance	AC1.4 **Examine** the rights of individuals in criminal investigations	AC3.3 **Examine** the limitations of agencies in achieving social control
AC1.4 **Describe** media representation of crime	AC3.2 **Evaluate** the effectiveness of criminological theories to explain causes of criminality	AC2.1 **Explain** the requirements of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for prosecuting suspects	AC3.4 **Evaluate** the effectiveness of agencies in achieving social control
AC3.3 **Justify** a campaign for change	AC4.1 **Assess** the use of criminological theories in informing policy development	AC2.5 **Discuss** the use of laypeople in criminal cases	AC3.1 **Explain** the role of agencies in social control

Command verbs

The following are definitions to help your understanding of command verbs:

- **Analyse**: examine in detail, break into component parts, examine relationships.
- **Assess**: make a judgement about the quality or value of something.
- **Compare**: explain similarities and differences.
- **Define**: state the meaning of a term.
- **Describe**: paint a picture in words, provide information with detail. Using this analogy, you would expect there to be some detail in the answer.
- **Design**: prepare materials such as a plan or drawing to show the look and function of something.
- **Draw conclusions**: decide on particular facts or principles from information given.
- **Evaluate**: make judgements about the quality or importance of something against criteria, usually based on analysis and data. Often includes the strengths and weaknesses of the topic.
- **Examine**: look at something carefully and in detail in order to discover something about the topic.
- **Explain**: give reasons.
- **Identify**: recognise, distinguish and establish what something is.
- **Illustrate**: exemplify, describe with reference to examples.
- **Justify**: persuade someone of the validity of an argument; validate a proposal.
- **Outline**: give a sketch of the situation, give an overall impression. A good outline becomes a description.
- **Plan**: to decide on and make arrangements for something in advance.
- **State**: make an assertion.
- **Understand**: know the meaning of something or know why or how something happens or works.

In answers, the examiner or moderator will differentiate the mark awarded to an answer by looking for the following:

- **Accuracy**: is what being claimed as fact actually correct?
- **Breadth/range**: is there an expectation of breadth rather than depth, i.e. you should have superficial knowledge of a lot of facts rather than in-depth knowledge of a few.
- **Clarity**: often related to communication skills, but you can anticipate that someone who really knows something knows how to organise what they are saying and doesn't mix fact with information that is incorrect or irrelevant. People who waffle tend to be less certain of their knowledge than those who can be succinct and to the point.
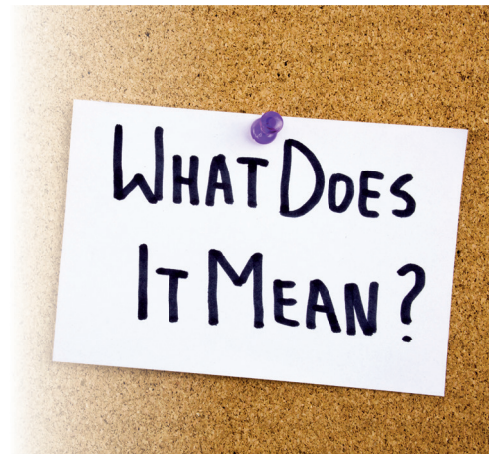
- **Depth/detail**: have you given sufficient detail to confirm that you really do know something?
- **Relevance/application**: do the facts have to be relevant to the situation? Is it simply pure theory or do you want to show knowledge through the discarding of what is considered irrelevant?
- **Justification**: would someone be persuaded by your argument and reasoning?
- **Substantiation**: have you drawn on evidence to support any conclusions made?
- **Validity**: is the reasoning valid? Is it accurate? Is it based on the context of the situation? Is it based on theory?

Main command words

Now let us consider some of the main command words used in the specifications.

Analyse

Analyse means to examine in detail, break into component parts or examine relationships. The following ACs feature this command word:

Unit 1	Unit 2
AC1.1 Analyse different types of crime	AC3.1 Analyse situations of criminality

This is how 'analyse' works for Unit 2 AC3.1.

Analyse situations of criminality. You must break-down into different parts the reasoning for crime occurring. The information in the question should give you clues about something that may be responsible for the criminality. This would be different for each of the three theories of criminality, i.e. biological, individualistic or sociological. By the time you are asked to analyse situations of criminality in an exam you already will have described one theory. Breaking down that theory and matching it to the appropriate part of the exam scenario you will be analysing.

For example, question 1 on the **Unit 2 2017 exam paper** had the following:

Paul, an unemployed local man, was convicted of murder. He was convicted after getting into a fight with Ian over an allegation of theft of money. Paul also has numerous previous convictions for drug dealing and theft. He has been in care since the age of seven, after his parents were given long custodial sentences. Ian's father, a local barrister, has started a campaign to bring back capital punishment for crimes of murder. His campaign has attracted the attention of local media and politicians.

Break-down the information in the scenario into possible links to criminality and you get the following:

- unemployed local man
- in care since the age of seven
- his parents were given long custodial sentences.

Depending on the theory you have already described in the exam, you must break-down that theory into aspects that are relevant to any of the above points. For example, if you have described the social learning theory you may break it down into the following points:

- unemployed local man – has a low income and may have learned that the rewards from crime are positive.
- in care since the age of seven – may have learned from those around him; peer group may be role models.
- his parents were given long custodial sentences – links to earning criminality from his parents; family are main role models.

The above bullet list shows a break-down of information or an analysis of it.

Evaluate

Evaluate means to make judgements against criteria, usually based on analysis and data. The following ACs feature this command word.

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
AC1.6 Evaluate methods of collecting statistics about crime AC2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of media used in campaigns for change	AC3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of criminological theories to explain causes of criminality	AC1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the roles of personnel involved in criminal investigations	AC3.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of agencies in achieving social control

Also see page 77 of the Student Book, AC3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of criminological theories to explain causes of criminality for more detail on evaluation. This is how it works for Unit 4 AC3.4:

> Evaluate the effectiveness of agencies in achieving social control. You must make a judgement about different agencies to decide whether or not they achieve social control. For example, using the agency of the police, on the following page is a table with information broken down into positives and negatives, or strengths and weaknesses, linked to social control. This can also be found on page 176. Note that there are examples and statistics to help make a judgement.

Police achieving social control		
Positives	**Negatives**	**Examples**
- Work with the community in keeping law and order. - Expertise with the socialist operations such as anti-terrorism, firearms and covert operations and intelligence. - Willingness to change to be more effective especially with changing crimes such as technological crimes. - The police are held to account for instance by Police and Crime Commissioners.	- Closing cases without identifying a suspect. For instance, in 2017 almost half of all cases were closed without a suspect being identified. - Rise in crime rates as identified by the Office for National Statistics. In July 2017 the Home Office reported that crime had risen by 10%. - Failure by the police to record crimes reported to them. This can be up to a fifth of all crime including serious offences which include sexual offences, domestic abuse and rape.	- The case of Stephen Lawrence resulted in the Macpherson Report which labelled the police 'institutionally racist'. - The police were condemned by the judge in the Colin Stagg case. He called the undercover operation 'deceptive conduct of the grossest kind'. - Other recent cases where the police have been criticised include 'the Puppy Farm Murder' and the disorder in Cromer in 2017.

Compare

Compare means to explain similarities and differences. The following ACs feature this command word.

Unit 1	Unit 2
AC2.1 Compare campaigns for change	AC1.1 Compare criminal behaviour and deviance

COMPARE

It is important to look at both similarities and differences when you compare.

This is how it works for Unit 2 AC1.1:

Compare criminal behaviour and deviance. Below is a table which can also be found on page 47. It shows similarities and differences for the terms crime and deviance.

Criminal behaviour only	Deviance only	Criminal behaviour and deviance
Acts that break the rules, deemed to be illegal by the law-making powers of a society. For example, murder or assault. Such acts result in punishment by the police (such as a caution) or by a court (such as a fine or imprisonment).	Acts that are against social norms. For example, shouting in a library or cross-dressing. Such acts result in sanctions from others in society such as name calling or ignoring the deviant person.	Some crimes can be against social norms such as theft or fraud but crimes such as speeding and illegal downloading of music are sometimes so commonplace that they are not deemed to be considered deviant.

Example question

Compare criminality and deviance with reference to relevant examples. [5 marks] **Unit 2 2017 exam paper**

To compare something, it is appropriate to include relevant terminology to show comparisons are taking place. For example:

- in comparison
- whereas
- in contrast
- but
- similarly
- likewise
- to the contrary.

Assess

Assess means to make a judgement about the quality or value of something. The following ACs feature this command word.

Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
AC4.1 Assess the use of criminological theories in informing policy development	AC1.2 Assess the usefulness of investigative techniques in criminal investigations AC2.4 Assess key influences affecting the outcomes of criminal cases	AC2.3 Assess how forms of punishment meet the aims of punishment

This is how it works for Unit 4 AC2.3:

> Assess how forms of punishment meet the aims of punishment. You must make a judgement about whether or not the types of punishment (e.g. custodial sentences, community sentences, financial penalties or discharges) achieve the identified aims of punishments (e.g. retribution, rehabilitation, reparation, etc.). To assess you need information to make a judgement. Such information would need to be factual and could contain data and statistics or examples to support your judgement.

The following, from 'Bromley Briefings' Summer 2018 by the Prison Reform Trust, focuses on information to help assess whether or not prison achieves any aims of punishment.

England and Wales has the highest imprisonment rate in Western Europe.

The prison population has risen by 77% in the last 30 years.

65,000 people were sent to prison to serve a sentence in 2017.

Short prison sentences are less effective than community sentences at reducing reoffending.

People serving mandatory life sentences are spending more of their sentence in prison. On average they spend 17 years in custody, up from 13 years in 2001.

Many of our prisons are overcrowded – and have been for a long time. Overcrowding affects whether activities, staff and other resources are available to reduce risk of reoffending, as well as distance from families and other support networks.

Many are released from prison, only to return there shortly after.

The number of people recalled back to custody has increased, particularly among women. 8,825 people serving a sentence of less than 12 months were recalled to prison in the year to December 2017.

Prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending – nearly half of adults (48%) are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 64%.

It could be argued that, as so many people are sent to prison, retribution is achieved. While offenders are in prison public protection also is achieved. However, given the reoffending rates, rehabilitation does not appear to be successful.