

# FACTFILE: GCSE FOOD AND NUTRITION

## COMPONENT 1



## A Guide to Reading and Understanding Examination Questions

Examination questions test the knowledge, understanding and skills developed during the study of GCSE Food and Nutrition.

Reading and understanding the examination question is an important skill for students to develop as without fully understanding the question they will not respond with sufficient accuracy and detail.

All questions have key words that indicate to the student **what** should be written and **how** they should write it. The student will be better placed to write a focused response if they can identify these key words in the question.

There are two types of key words to be aware of:

1. Content words
2. Command words

### 1. Content words

These indicate which topics the question is focusing on. For example:

Discuss the possible **consequences** of a **deficiency of folate**. (GCSE Home Economics: Food and Nutrition 2022 Q4a)

The content words in the question above are in bold. The key words 'consequences' and 'deficiency of folate' indicate that the student must focus only on the consequences of folate and not just describe everything they know about this vitamin.

Evaluate **online shopping** as a method of **food shopping for individuals on a low income**. (GCSE Home Economics: Food and Nutrition 2022 Q11)

The content words in the question above are in bold. The key words 'online shopping' and 'food shopping' indicates that the response must focus on online shopping for food only. The key phrase 'individuals on a low income' is directing the student to choose points relevant for those on a low income only rather than general points about online shopping.

The more content words and phrases in a question, the more demanding it will be for the students. The process of identifying and understanding these words is a valuable skill and one that should be practised until it becomes automatic. This will help students apply their knowledge and understanding accurately within the context of the question for example a particular lifecycle group or food shopping scenario.

### 2. Command words

Command words clarify what to do with the content. In the example questions above, the key words **Discuss** and **Evaluate** are command words rather than content words. Command words are key to accessing high marks, so it is essential that the student becomes familiar with the demands of the commonly used command words for this subject at this level.

## Glossary of Command Words for GCSE Food and Nutrition

The table below provides definitions and examples of commonly used command words for GCSE Food and Nutrition. The definitions are specific to this specification. Example questions are taken from past papers 2019-2022.

<b>Describe</b>	
Set out characteristics	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Describe how people living on their own could reduce food waste. [6] (Q4c 2021)</b></p> <p>When responding to this question students need to describe <i>what it would look like</i> if people living on their own reduced food waste. Detail can be provided with examples but there is no requirement to explain the points</p>
<b>Discuss</b>	
Present key points	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Discuss three factors which may influence food choice. [9] (Q10 2019)</b></p> <p>When responding to this question, the student is expected to identify three accurate factors and then discuss each one. The discussion will include key points about each factor. These key points could be examples or suggestions why they influence food choice. The response might include judgements as to how important the factor is in the influence of food choice. The use of specialist vocabulary will support the response for this command word. This command word usually demands an extended response</p>
<b>Evaluate</b>	
Consider evidence for and against	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Evaluate the use of independent grocery shops for a family with children when shopping for food. [12] (Q12 2021)</b></p> <p>In this question the student is expected to present a range of advantages and disadvantages of independent grocery stores. The response should then explain how each advantage and disadvantage will impact on a family with children. For example: <i>Independent grocery shops can be small. The aisles may be too narrow for parents with prams.</i> This command word usually demands an extended response</p>
<b>Explain</b>	
Set out purposes or reasons	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Explain why iron deficiency anaemia is more common in adolescent females (age 12-18 years). [2] (Q6b 2021)</b></p> <p>The student is expected to organise their response clearly and coherently so that the examiner easily understands the reasons why iron deficiency anaemia is more common in adolescent females. Coherence is extremely important when providing explanatory answers</p>

Identify	
Name	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Identify the two date marks that consumers should look for when purchasing food. [2] (Q6a 2022)</b></p> <p>The student is expected to name the two date marks only. No detail is required and short response answers are appropriate. This command word usually carries a small number of marks</p>
Justify	
Support with evidence	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Dental caries in children is a health problem in Northern Ireland. Justify diet and health advice for parents wanting to reduce their child's risk of dental caries. [9] (Q11 2019)</b></p> <p>The student is expected to state examples of diet and health advice to reduce the risk of dental caries in children. They should then briefly explain why each piece of advice will reduce dental caries in children. For example: <i>Use a fluoride toothpaste as fluoride strengthens tooth enamel.</i> The use of specialist vocabulary will support the response. This command word usually demands an extended response</p>
Outline	
Set out the main characteristics	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>Outline the protection offered to consumers by the following legislation: Food Safety (NI) Order 1991; Food Hygiene Regulations (NI) 2006. [6] (Q8b 2022)</b></p> <p>The student is expected to give the main facts of each piece of legislation without going into detail. There is no requirement to provide explanations</p>
State	
Express in clear terms	<p><b>Example question:</b>  <b>State why food additives are given an E number. [1] (Q8a 2019)</b></p> <p>In this question the student should respond by giving a reason for the use of E numbers. This should be very brief and clear. No detail is required and short response answers are appropriate. This command word usually carries a small number of marks</p>

### Suggested Activities

1. Choose a question from a past paper and identify the content words and command words. Start with short questions and gradually progress to longer questions. Practise in groups or with a partner until you are confident that you can identify the content words and command words independently and with confidence.
2. Look at a past paper question where the teacher has identified the content words and the command words and plan an appropriate answer. Practise in groups or with a partner until you are confident that you understand the content words and command words independently and with confidence.

