

# GCSE AQA GCSE Mathematics

Spec code: 8300 · Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

## Grade Boundaries

Session	Max	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
Jun 2024 Higher	240	219	191	163	129	95	61	44
Jun 2023 Higher	240	214	186	158	125	92	59	42
Jun 2024 Foundation	160	—	—	—	—	105	78	51
Jun 2023 Foundation	160	—	—	—	—	99	74	49

Higher tier max 240 (Papers 1, 2, 3 x 80 marks each). Foundation tier max 160. Source: AQA published subject grade boundaries. Always verify at [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk).

## Command Word Mastery

Mark schemes attach specific meaning to each command word below. Misreading one of these costs marks that working had already earned.

Command Word	What It Demands	Common Student Error	Workshop Fix
<b>Prove / Show that</b>	A complete, logically structured argument in formal mathematical language — every step explicitly justified.	Working that skips steps or assumes the result partway through. AQA mark schemes require each logical step to be stated.	Workshop drills present the proof skeleton; students must supply every justification before peer comparison.
<b>Hence</b>	Use the result from the immediately preceding part directly. An independent fresh method does not earn the marks.	Starting from scratch instead of applying the previous answer. Full method marks are lost even if the final answer is correct.	Facilitators pause after each part and ask: "What result do you now have, and where does it go next?"
<b>Find</b>	Calculate or state the required value, showing sufficient working for the examiner to award method marks.	Stating a bare answer without method. If the answer is wrong, zero marks are available without visible working.	Students write the method and result side-by-side. Peer reviewers check for the method line before checking the answer.
<b>Estimate</b>	Round each value to one significant figure first, then calculate. The rounded values must be shown.	Performing a precise calculation and calling it an estimate. Examiners expect to see rounded figures in the working.	Practice rounds open with estimation questions where exact calculators are banned for that question only.
<b>Describe</b>	Give a mathematical description that identifies the transformation (type, centre, vector, angle, scale factor) fully.	Naming only the type (e.g. "rotation") without giving the full set of required parameters.	Checklist drilling: for each transformation type, students recite the minimum required description before answering.

<b>Expand and simplify</b>	Multiply out all brackets and collect like terms. Both steps must appear — partial credit requires both.	Expanding correctly but not simplifying, or simplifying sign errors in the final collection step.	Peer marking with the mark scheme rubric: students award M1 for expansion and A1 for simplified form separately.
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**How EMI uses this:** Every AQA 8300 workshop opens with a five-minute examiner-report digest from the most recent series. Students see the exact command word that cost the cohort most marks, then drill that specific demand before moving to content.

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Data sourced from official board grade boundary documents. Always verify current boundaries at [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk) · This guide is produced by Exam Mastery International ([exammasteryinternational.com](https://www.exammasteryinternational.com)) for student and school use. Not affiliated with or endorsed by the examining board.