EXAM MASTERY INTERNATIONAL · FREE RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

GCSE Edexcel GCSE Mathematics

Spec code: 1MA1 · Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

Grade Boundaries

Session	Max	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
Jun 2025 Higher	240	217	186	156	121	87	53	36
Jun 2024 Higher	240	197	167	137	105	73	42	26
Jun 2023 Higher	240	203	174	145	112	79	47	31
Jun 2024 Foundation	160	—	—	—	—	97	65	34

Higher tier max 240 (Papers 1, 2, 3 × 80 marks each). Paper 1 non-calculator; Papers 2 and 3 calculator. Source: Pearson Edexcel published grade boundaries. Always verify at qualifications.pearson.com.

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
Show that	Demonstrate the stated result is true. Every algebraic or numerical step must be present. The answer is given — the marks are in the method.	Treating "show that" as a normal calculation and writing only a final line. With no working, no marks are awarded.	Workshop rule: for "show that" questions, students annotate every line before writing the next. Peer reviewer blocks progression if a line is unjustified.
Hence, or otherwise	Using the previous result is the intended route and will be faster. An alternative valid method is also accepted but carries a time penalty in exam conditions.	Ignoring "hence" and restarting from scratch, consuming time that costs performance on later questions.	Timed drills where the "otherwise" route is attempted first; students clock the difference and choose the efficient route.
Write down	State the answer without needing to show working. The answer is obtainable by inspection or direct reading.	Writing lengthy unnecessary working for a "write down" question, then making a transcription error from it.	Students practice circling "write down" before reading the question and setting a 30-second limit.
Prove	Present a formal logical argument. For algebraic proofs, work from one side or use both sides independently — never assume the result.	Starting with the target equation and rearranging it as if true. This is circular reasoning and earns zero.	Workshop introduces the two valid proof structures (LHS only; or both sides separately) and students categorise past questions by structure before attempting.
Give a reason	State the geometrical or algebraic rule that justifies the step — not just the step itself.	"Angles on a straight line" without naming 180 degrees, or vice versa. Incomplete reasons lose the mark.	Flashcard round: students match the angle fact to the correct formal reason as stated in Edexcel mark schemes.

Work out	Calculate, showing all intermediate steps. "Work out" implies a multi-step process; method marks are available throughout.	Omitting intermediate steps and writing only the final answer. One arithmetic error loses all subsequent marks.	Students are required to write a step count before beginning: "This needs N steps." Peer reviewer checks that N steps appear.

How EMI uses this: Edexcel 1MA1 is the UK's highest-entry GCSE Maths specification. Every EMI workshop addresses the mark scheme's specific expectations for working, not just the correct answer. Students learn that on Edexcel, method marks and accuracy marks are separated — and that losing an accuracy mark should never also lose a method mark.