IB Biology Command Terms

These command terms indicate the depth of treatment required for a given assessment statement. These command terms will be use in examination questions, so it is important that you are familiar with the following definitions.

Objective 1

Define	Give the precise meaning of the word, phrase or physical quality.
Draw	Represent by means of pencil lines (always label unless told NOT to do so).
Label	Add labels to a diagram.
List	Give a sequence of names or other brief answers with NO explanation.
Measure	Find a value for a quantity.
State	Give a specific name, value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.

Objective 2

Annotate	Add brief notes to the diagram or graph.
Apply	Use an idea, equation, principle, theory or law in a new situation
Calculate	Find a numerical answer showing the relevant stages in the working (unless instructed not to do so).
Describe	Give a detailed account.
Distinguish	Give the differences between two or more different items.
Estimate	Find an approximate value for an unknown quantity.
Identify	Find an answer from a given number of possibilities.
Outline	Give a brief account or summary

Objective 3

Analyse	Interpret data to reach conclusions.
Comment	Give a judgement based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Compare	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Construct	Represent or develop in graphical form.
Deduce	Reach a conclusion from the information given.
Derive	Manipulate a mathematical relationship(s) to give a new equation or relationship.
Design	Produce a plan, simulation or model.
Determine	Find the only possible answer.
Discuss	Give an account including, where possible, a range of arguments for and against the relative importance of various factors, or comparisons of alternative hypotheses.
Evaluate	Assess the implications and limitations.
Explain	Give a detailed account of causes, reasons or mechanisms.
Predict	Give an expected result.
Show	Give the steps in a calculation or derivation.
Sketch	Represent by means of a graph showing a line and labelled but unscaled axes, but with important features (for example, intercept) clearly indicated.
Solve	Obtain an answer using algebraic and/or numerical methods.
Suggest	Propose a hypothesis or other possible answer.