Maths Command Words

Estimate
Don't work out exactly! Round the numbers to one significant figure first.

Estimate 4.7×6.2
Answer: $5 \times 6 = 30$

Explain
You must state why.

Work out
A written or mental calculation is needed.

Work out 6^2
Answer: $6 \times 6 = 36$

Simplify
Collect like terms together

Simplify $e + 7e$
Answer: $8e$

Give your answer in its simplest form
Cancelling of a fraction or ratio is needed.

$12 : 15$
simplified is $4 : 5$

Calculate
You will need to do a sum either with or without your calculator.

Expand
Multiply out the brackets

Expand $4(3x - 2)$
Answer: $12x - 8$

You must show your working
If you don't show your working you won't get ALL the marks!

Describe fully
Usually with transformations:

Translation by a vector (2 marks)
Enlargement of a scale factor about a point (3 marks)
Reflection in a mirror line (2 marks)
Rotation through an angle about a point (3 marks)

Solve
Find the value of the variable in the question.

Solve: $3x = 12$
Answer: $x = 4$

Factorise
To find factors and put brackets in.

Factorise $6x + 10x^2$
Answer: $2x(3 + 5x)$

Sketch
An accurate drawing is not needed; freehand will do!

Construct, using ruler and compasses
Use your ruler and pair of compasses to make an accurate drawing.

Measure
Use a ruler or protractor to accurately measure lines or angles.

Diagram NOT accurately drawn
Don't measure angles or sides.