

IGCSE Cambridge CAIE IGCSE Mathematics

Spec code: 0580 · Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

Grade Thresholds

Session	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Jun 2024 Extended (BX)00	200	152	125	98	72	56	40
Jun 2024 Extended (BY)00	200	175	150	117	85	66	48
Jun 2024 Extended (BZ)00	200	172	144	114	85	65	45
Nov 2024 Extended (BX)00	200	168	140	112	84	66	49
Nov 2024 Extended (BY)00	200	180	160	130	100	82	64

Extended tier (Papers 2 + 4) max 200 marks. Variant BX, BY, BZ reflect different paper variants sat in the same series. Core tier (Papers 1 + 3) max 160 marks, highest grade C. Source: Cambridge International published grade threshold tables. Always verify at [cambridgeinternational.org](https://www.cambridgeinternational.org).

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 by presenting every step of working. The answer is given — marks are earned through method only.	Writing only the final line or skipping algebraic steps. No working = no marks, even if the result is printed in the question.	Students write the proof without looking at the target result. Only after completing do they check they arrived at the stated answer.
Hence	Use the result established in the previous part. The method mark requires the link to be visible — state which result you are using.	Reworking from the start instead of referencing the previous answer. Misses the method mark entirely.	"Hence" questions are paired in practice: students solve Part (a), then highlight the result before attempting Part (b).
Write down	No formal working needed — the answer can be read directly from the diagram, context, or a preceding result.	Over-working: writing full calculations for a "write down", then making an arithmetic error that contradicts the obvious answer.	Students mark "write down" in the margin before reading and cap their time at 45 seconds.
Describe	For transformations: state all required parameters. Reflection requires mirror line; rotation requires centre, angle, direction; enlargement requires centre and scale factor.	Naming the transformation type without the full parameter set. Cambridge mark schemes require all parameters for full marks.	Transformation description checklist: before writing, students name the type then ask "what else does this transformation need?"
Calculate	Use the given information to find the answer arithmetically. Show substitution into any formula used.	Substituting into a formula but not writing the formula itself first. If the substitution contains an error, no method marks are visible.	Formula-first rule: write the formula, then substitute, then calculate. Three visible lines for every "Calculate".

Sketch	Show key features — intercepts, turning points, asymptotes, general shape. Accuracy of plotting is not required.	Plotting a precise table of values for a sketch question, using five minutes on a one-mark item.	Sketch practice with 60-second limit: identify the curve type, mark intercepts and turning points only.
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How EMI uses this: Cambridge 0580 variants (BX, BY, BZ) can vary by up to 25 marks in their A* threshold in the same series — a fact that surprises most students. EMI workshops explain the variant system and use examiner reports to target the specific question types that shift across variants. No working shown remains the most cited cause of mark loss in Cambridge examiner reports: every workshop session enforces the three-line minimum (formula → substitution → answer).

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