A-LEVEL EXAM MASTERY · FREE RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

Edexcel Physics 9PH0

Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

Grade Boundaries

Session	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Jun 2023	**223**	190	158	126	94	62

Out of 300 (overall qualification — Papers 1, 2, 3). Source: Pearson Edexcel published grade boundary table, June 2023 — the most recently verified figure available at time of writing. Always confirm the current series boundary at qualifications.pearson.com.

Command Word Mastery

Mark schemes for Edexcel 9PH0 attach specific meaning to each command word below. Misreading one of these costs marks a student's working had already earned.

Command Word	What It Demands	Common Student Error	Workshop Fix
Determine	Calculate a numerical answer with method shown, to appropriate significant figures with correct units	Correct method and value but missing units or wrong significant figures — the accuracy mark is lost	Drill phase: every "Determine" answer checked against significant-figure and unit conventions
Explain	Give a reasoned account linking cause to effect using physics principles, not a restatement	Describing an observation without explaining the physical reason behind it	Anatomy phase: "Explain" answers deconstructed against required physics vocabulary
Discuss	Build a structured argument considering more than one factor, reaching a clear conclusion	Writing an unstructured list of everything known about the topic, without weighing or concluding	Close phase: peer comparison of "Discuss" answers against a mark scheme rewarding structure
Estimate	State a sensible assumption, show a simple calculation, arrive at an order-of-magnitude answer	Refusing to commit to an assumption, or treating "Estimate" as needing high precision	Open Forum: rapid "Estimate" drills building confidence in stating assumptions