


STUDENT GUIDE TO

ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS





To help you do your best in your exams and coursework, our Subject and Assessment teams have created this guide to explain what assessment instructions are, why they're important, and what happens if they're not followed.

Please read this carefully. If anything isn't clear, speak with your teacher or lecturer - they're there to help.



WHAT ARE ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS?

Assessment instructions (sometimes called rubrics) tell you how to complete each section or question — for example:

- “Answer all questions in the spaces provided.”
- “Answer either Question 1 or Question 2, and then answer Question 3.”
- “Tick three statements below which best describe...”
- “Match each statement in column A to its definition in column B.”

These instructions make sure you understand exactly what you need to do to answer the question correctly.

WHY SHOULD YOU FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS?

Following the instructions helps you:

- Save time — you don't waste time doing unnecessary work.
- Avoid losing marks — you get credit only for answers that meet the instructions.
- Stay focused — you know what's expected in each section.

Ignoring instructions could mean you lose marks, even if your answers are otherwise correct.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS?

Our examiners are trained to mark fairly and consistently. That means if someone doesn't follow the instructions, we handle it in a way that's fair to everyone — without unfairly helping or penalising anyone.

Below are some common situations and how they're handled

1. ANSWERING MORE THAN ONE OPTIONAL QUESTION

Instruction: “Answer either Question 1 or Question 2.”

If you answer both: Both answers will be marked, and you'll get the higher of the two marks.

2. SELECTING TOO MANY ANSWERS IN A MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTION

Instruction: “Tick the three correct statements.”

If you tick more than three: You'll get marks for the correct answers, but one mark will be taken away for each extra tick.

You can't go below zero — the lowest score is 0.

Example: Tick the three correct statements from the list provided below.

Choice	Tick the correct choice
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	
Incorrect response	✓
Incorrect response	
Incorrect response	
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	

← This student ticked four boxes when only three were needed.

As a result, they receive 2 marks: one mark for each correct answer, with one mark taken away for the extra tick.

3. GIVING TOO MANY ANSWERS IN A WRITTEN QUESTION

Instruction: “Give three reasons why...”

If you give more than three answers, what happens depends on the question type:

- If there are only a few possible answers (for example, naming prime numbers between 1-10), we'll mark all your answers, then take off one mark for each extra one you gave.
 - **Example:** You give four answers, three correct → You get 2 marks ($3-1=2$).
- If there are many possible answers, we'll just mark the correct ones up to the maximum marks available.
- If all your answers are wrong, your score stays at 0 — we don't take away marks below zero.

4. USING THE WRONG SYMBOL (E.G., CROSS INSTEAD OF TICK)

Instruction: “Tick the three correct statements.”

If you use a different symbol (like an “X”) instead of a tick and do it consistently, that's fine — you won't lose marks.

But if you mix symbols (ticks and crosses), we'll only mark the ticks, since it's unclear what you meant.

Example: Tick the four correct statements from the list provided below.

Choice	Tick the correct choice
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	
Incorrect response	
Correct response	X
Incorrect response	
Correct response	✓
Incorrect response	



In this example, the student chose all four correct answers but used a cross instead of a tick for one of them. Because it's unclear what the student intended by crossing it out, they are awarded 3 marks.

5. CROSSING OUT A CORRECT ANSWER

If you cross out an answer, we won't mark it — even if it's right — unless you clearly write that you didn't mean to cross it out.

Example: Name the two British Prime Ministers who led the government of the United Kingdom during World War II. (2 marks)

Winston Churchill and ~~Neville Chamberlain~~.

The student chose the two correct answers but crossed one of them out. Because that answer is unclear, they are awarded only one mark, even though they didn't give a different answer.

6. LABELLING SOMETHING INCORRECTLY

If you label your answer to Question 5 as “Question 6,” or refer to “Table 1” instead of “Table 2,” you won't lose marks as long as it's clear what you meant.

However, if you repeat the same answer under both questions, you'll only get credit once.

7. WRITING ANSWERS IN THE WRONG PLACE

If you write your answer in the wrong place on the paper but it's clear which question you're answering, you won't be penalised.

However, this can make things harder for you — for example, you might write too little or too much.

If a question specifically asks you to add something to a box, graph, or diagram, and you don't, you won't get marks for that part.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Always take a few seconds to read and follow the instructions carefully before answering. It's one of the easiest ways to make sure you get the marks you deserve!