

An Introduction to Edexcel A-Level PE 2024-2025



The PE Classroom

Welcome to Edexcel A-Level PE! This booklet is designed to give you an outline of the format of the course. You should come back to this booklet over the next couple of years to remind yourself of everything from practical activities, to how to answer questions! This booklet is designed to give you an outline of the format of the course.

The Course

The course involves both written and practical assessments. This variation allows you to play to your strengths as well as developing theoretical and practical skills for further education or work.

How You'll Be Assessed:

- Paper 1 - 140 marks, 2 hrs 30 mins (40% of A-Level)
- Paper 2 - 100 marks, 2 hrs (30% of A-Level)
- Practical Performance - 40 marks (40% of A-Level)
- Evaluation & Analysis - 40 marks (15% of A-level)



Grading

At the end of the course, you will be given a grade between A* - E. The table below shows the grade boundaries for the two years:

Series - UMS	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Jun-24	360	260	231	200	169	138	108

2024 Paper	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Paper 1	140	85	75	63	51	39	28
Paper 2	100	65	57	49	41	33	26

Practical Activities (Non-Exam Assessment)

Throughout the next two years, you will get the opportunity to develop your ability and skill-level in various physical activities. You will be expected to:

- Perform a range of skills and techniques,
- Make decisions, implement strategies, tactics and/or compositional ideas,
- Apply knowledge and understanding of rules and regulations while performing,
- Apply knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, principles and methods to physical activity and performance,
- Evaluate performance in physical activity.

Part 1 - Performance Assessment (Practical Performance)

You will be assessed in one activity as a player/performer or coach listed in the specification. This assessment will be carried in the full-context of the chosen activity and you will be marked against the following criteria:



Practical performers are assessed on the quality of appropriate skills, techniques and decision making processes under pressure, to meet the challenges of conditioned practice and a formal/competitive situation

You will receive a mark out of 40. This is done on a best fit approach, whereby each of the following criteria is awarded a level between 1-5 and best fit approach dictates the level your performance is placed in:

- **Position-specific skills and techniques performed to an outstanding level.**
- **Skills and techniques performed to an outstanding level.**
- **Outstanding influence on performance and motivation of self and others.**
- **Applies tactical changes highly effectively in response to the opposition's actions without misjudgements.**
- **Adapts highly effectively to changes in a competitive situation**
- **to dominate opponents with an outstanding level of success.**



Coaches will be assessed on their ability to coach effectively through the planning, organisation and delivery of coaching sessions to an individual, group or team while under observation in conditioned practice and a formal/competitive situation. As a coach, you must show:

- 1. Judgement of the authority.**
- 2. Sport/activity specific knowledge (of laws, techniques, safeguarding and regulations).**
- 3. Strategy/planning/aim.**
- 4. Organisation (logistics, planning, health and safety, risk management).**
- 5. Motivation/inspiration/empathy with individual, group or team.**
- 6. Performance of coaching in a formal/competitive situation – ability to communicate, adapt, and refine – their coaching style and strategies to meet their aim(s).**
- 7. Analysis and evaluation – feedback and guidance before, during and after the formal/competitive situation, reflecting potential changes in strategy.**
- 8. Use of appropriate physical characteristics/attributes to benefit their own performance.**
- 9. Demonstrate psychological control (e.g. anxiety, arousal, aggression).**

The specification lists the accepted activities, their core and advanced skills and the criteria/content for each area of assessment that each activity is marked against.



You will receive a mark out of 40. This is done on a best fit approach, whereby each of the following criteria is awarded a level between 1-5 and best fit approach dictates the level your performance is placed in:

- Appropriate and structured organisation, with a clearly defined aim(s), fully utilising SMART(ER) principles, with appropriate coaching relevant to the skill, abilities and fitness of the individual, group or team.
- Clear, concise, and effective coaching delivery, reflecting a thorough sport/activity-specific knowledge and a mature ability to manage the coaching environment.
- Effective and enhancing adaptations of communication and coaching style, showing appropriate empathy to meet the needs of the individual, group or team seen through the effective use of voice, gesture and/or demonstration.
- Responding flexibly and correctly to changing formal/competitive situation and/or external conditions.
- The feedback and guidance (based on accurate interpretation of performance data and/or observation) given is insightful, relevant and targeted to needs of the individual, group or team, and the use of coaching aids, e.g. video, may be employed.
- Self-reflection demonstrates critical and insightful
- considerations of the areas for personal improvement as a coach.



Part 2 - Performance Analysis Assessment & PDP **(Analysis & Evaluation)**

In this assessment students must complete a Performance Analysis and then, based on the results of the analysis, produce a Performance Development Programme (PDP).

Marking criteria:

- Analysis (20 Marks)
- PDP (20 marks)



Performance Analysis - In either the role of player/performer or coach, students will investigate two components of a physical activity (one physiological component and either a technical or a tactical component) in order to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of their own performance.

Performance Development Programme (PDP) - Is designed to lead on from the student's Performance Analysis. The purpose of the PDP is to optimise the student's performance in the role of a player/performer or coach.

Note - It is recommended that students carry out their Performance Analysis and PDP in the same role and physical activity as undertaken for Component 3: Practical performance, to give them the opportunity to develop breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in their chosen activity.



Examined Assessment

Throughout the next couple of years you will spend a large amount of the course working towards the written exams which you will take at the end of the second year.

The two papers are:

1. Scientific Principles of Physical Education (140 marks).
2. Psychological and Social Principles of Physical Education (100 marks).

Each exam will contain a mix of multiple choice, short answer, long answer and extended answer questions.

Paper 1 - One extended-answer question per section.

Paper 2 - Two extended-answer questions per section.

You must answer these questions in different ways in order to gain maximum marks. However, for every question, pay close attention to two aspects:

- Number of marks available
- Wording of the question



If you can learn how to decipher exam questions then this will massively improve your chances of succeeding in your A-Level exams

What's Assessed?

Paper 1: Scientific Principles of Physical Education

- Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology (Section A on exam)
- Topic 2: Exercise and physiology and applied movement analysis (Section B on exam)

Paper 2: Psychological and Social Principles of Physical Education

- Topic 3: Skill Acquisition (Section A on exam)
- Topic 4: Sports Psychology (Section A on exam)
- Topic 5: Sport and Society (Section B on exam)

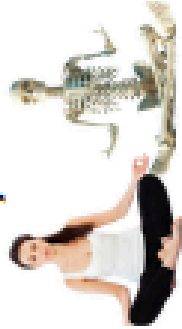
Both exams are split into Section A and B.

Extended questions will require knowledge from across the course of study.



Paper 1

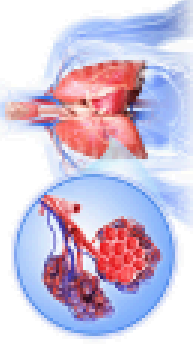
Skeletal & Muscular Systems



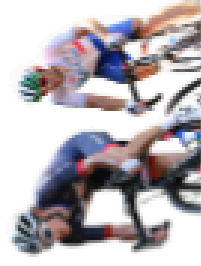
Cardiovascular System



Respiratory System



Energy Systems & Environmental Effects



Injury Prevention & Rehabilitation



Preparation & Training Methods



Diet & Nutrition



Newton's Laws & Levers

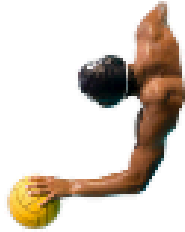


Motions & Mechanics



Paper 2

Skill Acquisition



Practice & Transfer of Learning



Stages & Theories of Learning



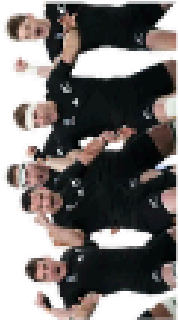
Guidance & Feedback



Memory Models



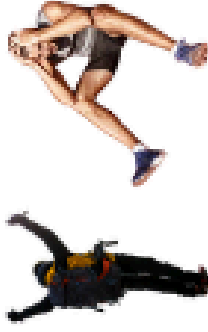
Leadership, Stress Management, Group Dynamics



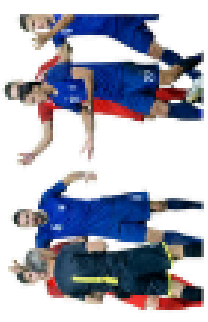
Goal Setting, Confidence, Attribution



Motivation, Anxiety, Aggression, Social Facilitation



Personality, Attitudes, Arousal



Emergence & Evolution of Sport



Global Sporting Events



Ethics & Deviance



Commercialisation & Media



Sporting Excellence & Modern Technology



Command Words

Command words and phrases used in exams will tell you how you should answer the question. These will be similar to questions in your other subjects, so you will quickly get used to them.

Command Word	Definition
Analyse	Separate information and identify their characteristics
Apply	Put into effect in a recognised way
Assess	Make an informed judgement
Calculate	Work out the value of something
Comment	Present an informed opinion
Compare	Identify similarities and differences
Complete	Finish a task by adding to given information
Consider	Review and respond to given information
Contrast	Identify differences
Define	Specify meaning
Describe	Set out characteristics
Discuss	Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea
Draw	To produce, or add to, a diagram
Evaluate	Judge from available evidence
Explain	Set out purpose or reasons
Give	Produce an answer from recall
Identify	Name or otherwise characterise
Interpret	Translate information into a recognisable form
Justify	Support a case with evidence
Label	Provide appropriate names on a diagram
Name	Identify using a recognised technical term
Outline	Set out main characteristics
Plot	Mark on a graph
Sketch	Draw approximately
State	Express clearly and briefly
Suggest	Present a possible case/solution



Short Exam Questions

1 Mark Questions

These questions can require 1 word or 1 phrase within the answer. There is no need for further explanation. Let's take a look at some examples:

Question: Name one bone found at the knee joint. (1 mark)

Answer: Femur OR Tibia

This question can be answered using one word only. There is no need to elaborate any further.

Question: What is fartlek training? (1 mark)

Answer: Training using different intensities or over different terrains e.g. sprint, jog, walk, sprint, etc.

One word will not be enough to answer this question but a simple statement/definition is all that is required. There is no need to go into further details regarding how a training session will look or who will use fartlek training.

2/3 Mark Question

2 and 3 mark questions might ask for the following:

- Separate points
- One point, followed by an explanation

Question: State two structural features of veins. (2 marks)

Answer: Any two from:

- Thin Walls
- Contain Valves
- Large Lumen

'State 2' is the important phrase. It is clearly asking for two points and no explanation or further information is required.

There are a few strategies you could select here. Whichever you choose, you need to:

- State the strategy.
- Briefly describe the strategy.
- Apply the strategy to an appropriate sporting example.

Question: Identify and describe one strategy a coach could use to develop approach behaviour. Use a sporting example to support your answer. (3 marks)

Example Answer:

Mark One: Reinforcement

Mark Two: The coach could praise players who do well so players keep the desire to do well

Mark Three: A rugby coach could congratulate a player each time they score

There will be no benefit to naming/explaining any further strategies, just stick to one.



4 Mark Questions

These types of question might require you to do one of the following:

- Make a point followed by an explanation
- Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages on the topic given

These are very similar to 3 mark answers but with a slightly longer answer given with a little bit of extra detail.

Question: Identify and describe two different stress management techniques. (4 marks)

Example Answer:

Deep breathing (1) which involves a performer exaggerating their breaths in and out (1)

Mental rehearsal or Imagery (1) which involves a performer picturing themselves performing the skill perfectly or imagining positive outcomes before attempting it (1)

'The question here clearly shows that 2 marks will be given for 'identification' and another 2 for 'descriptions'



Question: Explain the advantages and disadvantages of using whole practice when learning a gymnastic floor routine. (4 marks)

The word 'explain' is key within this question as it shows that you need demonstrate why points are advantages or disadvantages.

Example Answer:

Pros of whole practice marks (maximum 3 marks)

Time efficient so can learn a new routine/several routines quickly for an upcoming competition (1)

Fluency/relationship between subroutines is maintained which is vital for a floor routine (1)

Mental picture of whole floor routine can be developed aiding memory/future competitions (1)

Answers must relate to the use of whole practice in gymnastics

Cons of whole practice marks (maximum 3 marks)

A whole new floor routine may be too much information which is difficult for the performer to remember (1)

Doesn't allow the development of new/weaker skills as the performer is attempting the whole routine/not focusing on developing specific new skills (1)

May cause fatigue leading to errors/injury (1)



Extended Exam Questions

In both A-Level PE exams you need to be prepared to answer **8-mark questions** and **15-mark questions**.

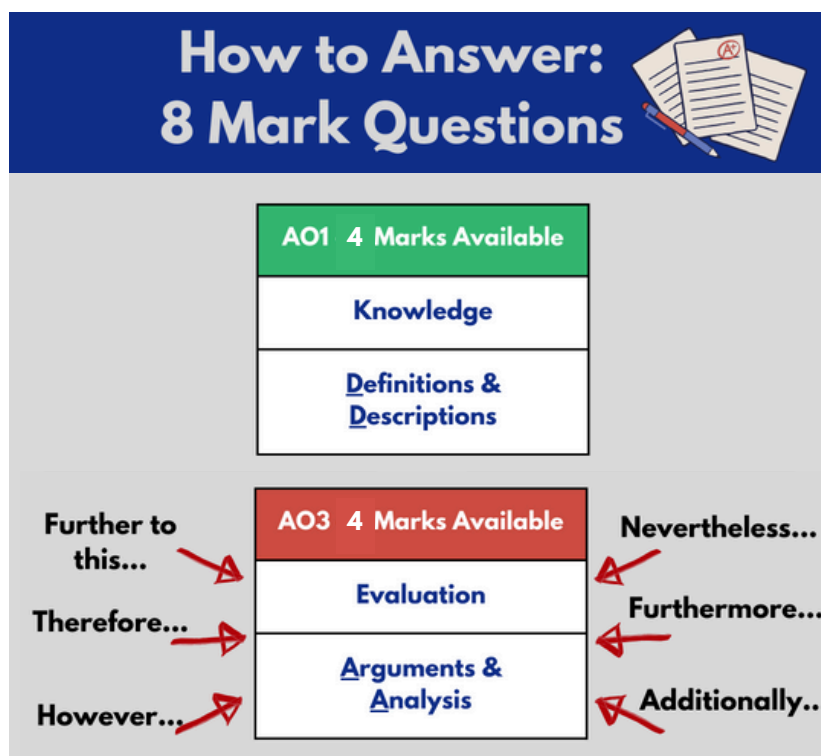
Understanding how to answer these extended questions can make a huge difference to your overall grade.

8 Mark Questions

When answering a 8-mark question it is important to consider **A01** and **A03**.

A01 marks are given for showing knowledge. This may be in the form of simple statements in response to the question, such as definitions and descriptions. You can gain **4 marks for A01** when answering a 8-mark question.

A03 marks are given for evaluation. This may be in the form of arguments and analysis. You can gain **4 marks for A03** when answering a 8-mark question.



The structure of your answer is completely up to you and will not have an impact on the marks that you gain.



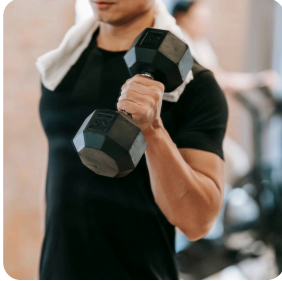
Example:

Following a period of strength training, an athlete may have more powerful muscular contractions.

Examine the structural adaptations that would enable this to occur. (8 marks)

A01 = 4 Marks A03 = 4 Marks

Always give a brief introduction to the topic first.



Paragraph 1 (Introduction)

Following a period of strength training, several structural adaptations occur within the muscular system that enable more powerful muscular contractions.

Paragraph 2 (A01 - 1 mark, A03 - 1 mark)

Firstly, muscle hypertrophy occurs. The individual muscle fibres, particularly Type II (fast-twitch) fibres, increase in size as a result of the synthesis of new contractile proteins. This enlargement leads to a greater cross-sectional area of the muscle (A01). This directly increases the potential force the muscle can generate, as larger fibres contain more actin and myosin filaments capable of producing force (A03).

Paragraph 3 (A01 - 1 mark, A03 - 1 mark)

Secondly, there is an increase in the number and size of myofibrils within each muscle fibre (A01). This structural change enhances the contractile capacity of the muscle, as more sarcomeres in parallel allow for greater overall tension to be developed during contraction (A03).

Clearly state each adaptation that occurs, followed by an explanation of its impact.

Paragraph 4 (A01 - 1 mark, A03 - 1 mark)

Additionally, strength training leads to increased thickness of connective tissues, such as tendons and ligaments (A01). Thicker and stronger tendons improve the efficiency of force transmission from muscle to bone, reducing the risk of injury and ensuring more of the muscle's force contributes to movement (A03).

Paragraph 5 (A01 - 1 mark, A03 - 1 mark)

Lastly, greater stores of phosphocreatine (PC) and ATP develop in the muscle (A01). This adaptation allows the muscle to sustain maximal contraction for longer during high-intensity efforts, ensuring that contractions remain powerful even during repeated movements (A03).

In summary, these structural adaptations following strength training — including hypertrophy, increased myofibrils, stronger connective tissues, improved motor unit recruitment, and enhanced energy stores — all interact to enable the athlete to produce more powerful muscular contractions.



Finish your answer with a conclusion to summarise your points.

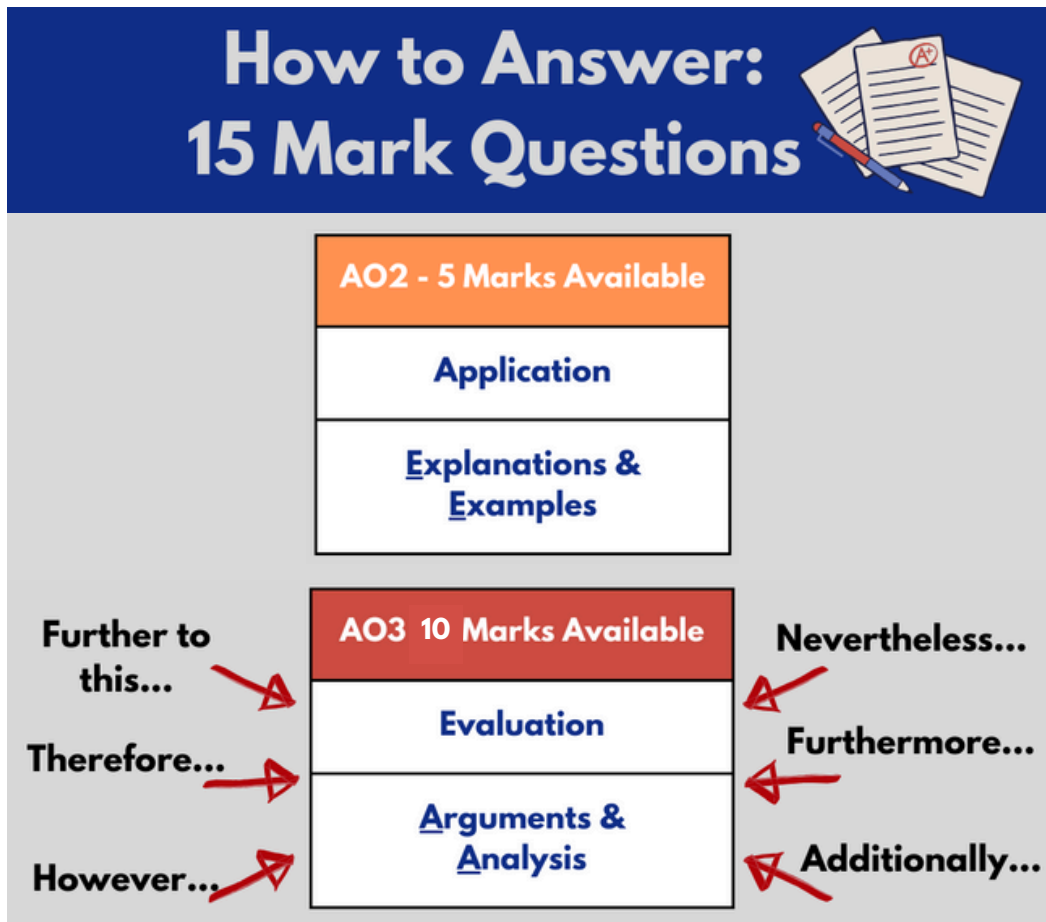


15 Mark Questions

When answering a 15-mark question we must again consider the marks allocated for **A02** and **A03**.

A02 = 5 Marks

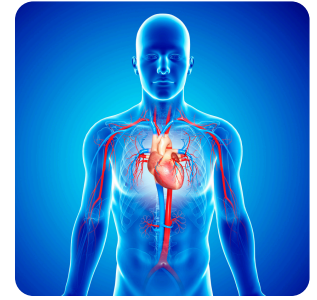
A03 = 10 Marks



Hint - For both 8 and 15 mark questions it is a good idea to create a quick plan. This might include bullet points of what you will include in each paragraph.

Example:

Discuss how the cardiovascular and respiratory systems function both individually and in conjunction with each other.



A02 = 5 marks A03 = 10 marks

Brief introduction to the topic first.

Section 1 (Introduction)

Both the cardiovascular and respiratory systems play vital roles in supporting physical activity. They function individually but also work closely together to ensure the delivery of oxygen to the working muscles and the removal of carbon dioxide.

Section 2 (AO2 – 5 marks)

Individually, the cardiovascular system is responsible for transporting oxygenated blood from the lungs to the muscles and returning deoxygenated blood back to the lungs (AO2). During exercise, heart rate, stroke volume and cardiac output increase (AO2). An elevated cardiac output allows more oxygen to be delivered per minute to the working tissues.

The respiratory system is responsible for gaseous exchange, enabling oxygen to enter the blood and carbon dioxide to be removed (AO2). During exercise, both tidal volume and breathing frequency increase (AO2), which enhances minute ventilation and maximises oxygen uptake.

Addresses both Cardiovascular and Respiratory system

Comprehensive and detailed discussion showing a full understanding of how the systems function individually and together.

Section 3 (A03 - 10 marks)

In conjunction, these two systems coordinate to meet the rising metabolic demands of exercise. As exercise begins, chemoreceptors detect rising carbon dioxide levels and acidity in the blood (AO3). This triggers an increase in ventilation rate and heart rate via stimulation of the medulla oblongata (AO3). This ensures that more oxygen is taken into the lungs and that the cardiovascular system delivers it rapidly to the muscles. Furthermore, the close relationship between the systems is evident at the alveolar-capillary interface (AO3). The steep concentration gradient created by the respiratory system facilitates oxygen diffusion into the blood, which is then transported efficiently by the cardiovascular system to the active muscles. Conversely, carbon dioxide diffuses from the blood into the alveoli to be exhaled. During sustained exercise, the Bohr shift occurs, meaning haemoglobin releases oxygen more readily due to the increased acidity and temperature in the muscle tissues (AO3). The cardiovascular system responds by increasing blood flow to these areas, ensuring oxygen delivery matches demand.

Recovery also highlights their interaction. Once exercise ends, both systems gradually return to resting levels via mechanisms such as decreased sympathetic stimulation and the continued removal of metabolic by-products (AO3). This coordination helps restore homeostasis.

In summary, while the cardiovascular and respiratory systems perform distinct roles, they operate in close synergy to optimise oxygen delivery, carbon dioxide removal, and overall performance, particularly under the increasing demands of exercise.

Conclusion to summarise points made.



All Extended Answers are marked using a level system. Refer back to these tables when practising Extended Questions so you get to know the difference between answers at different levels.

8 Mark Questions

Level	Marks	Description
3	6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high level of accurate and relevant knowledge (AO1). • Articulates a clear viewpoint with clarity and precision which is well substantiated (AO1). • Critically examines a wide range of issues balancing ideas against each other (AO3). • Clear evaluative statement which is thorough and focussed (AO3)
2	3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good level of accurate and relevant knowledge (AO1). • A line of reasoning is presented and supported by some evidence (AO1). • Examines a wide range of ideas, balancing ideas against each other (AO3). • An evaluative statement which is relevant (AO3)
1	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some accurate and relevant knowledge (AO1). • Simple or generalised statements supported by limited evidence (AO1). • Limited balancing of ideas against each other (AO3). • Limited evaluative statement (AO3).
	0	No relevant content

All Extended Answers are marked using a level system. Refer back to these tables when practising Extended Questions so you get to know the difference between different level answers.

15 Mark Questions

Level	Marks	Description
5	13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes many insightful and significant links between theory and practice. Appropriate technical language supports a significant level of knowledge and understanding (AO2). • Sophisticated analysis of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport (AO3). • Uses analysis to make a fully informed judgement and supports this with examples (AO3).
4	10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes strong links between theory and practice. Appropriate technical language supports a very good knowledge and understanding (AO2). • Comprehensive analysis of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport (AO3). • Uses analysis to make a clear judgement and supports this with examples (AO3).
3	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes some links between theory and practice. Some appropriate technical language supports a good knowledge and understanding (AO2). • Good analysis of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport (AO3). • Uses analysis to make a judgement but without full substantiation (AO3).
2	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes few links between theory and practice. Basic technical language supports some elements of knowledge and understanding (AO2). • Attempts some analysis of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport (AO3). • Analysis may not be used to make a clear judgement (AO3).
1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are limited links between theory and practice. Limited technical language supports isolated elements of knowledge and understanding (AO2). • Limited analysis of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport (AO3). • Analysis is not used to make a judgement (AO3).
	0	No relevant content



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