GCSE Question guidance

Structure of a GCSE paper

Each paper will become more challenging as you work through the paper and also through each question.
Questions= Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.
Ramping = Means that a question gets progressively more difficult as you work through it. Questions for any topic area will be ramped in terms of demand within the question, as well as within the paper. The demand also increases steadily throughout the paper.

What is the question asking? - Look closely at the **COMMAND** Words

Calculate = Students should use numbers given in the question to work out the answer.
Choose* = Select from a range of alternatives.
Compare = This requires the student to describe the similarities and/or differences between things, not just write about one.
Complete = Answers should be written in the space provided, for example, on a diagram, in spaces in a sentence or in a table.
Define* = Specify the meaning of something.
Describe = Students may be asked to recall some facts, events or process in an accurate way.
Design* = Set out how something will be done.
Determine* = Use given data or information to obtain and answer.
Draw = To produce, or add to, a diagram.
Estimate = Assign an approximate value.
Evaluate = Students should use the information supplied as well as their knowledge and understanding to consider evidence for and against.
Explain = Students should make something clear, or state the reasons for something happening.
Give = Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description.
Identify* = Name or otherwise characterise.
Justify = Use evidence from the information supplied to support an answer.
Label = Provide appropriate names on a diagram.
Measure* = Find an item of data for a given quantity.
Name = Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description. Often it can be answered with a single word, phrase or sentence.
Plan* = Write a method.
Plot* = Mark on a graph using data given.
Predict* = Give a plausible outcome.
Show* = Provided structured evidence to reach a conclusion.
Sketch* = Draw approximately.
Suggest = This term is used in questions where students need to apply their knowledge and understanding to a new situation.

Use = The answer must be based on the information given in the question. Unless the information given in the question is used, no marks can be given. In some cases students might be asked to use their own knowledge and understanding.
Work out* = Students should use numbers given in the question to work out the answer.
Write = Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description.

Examples

Compare
This requires the student to describe the similarities and/or differences between things, not just write about one.

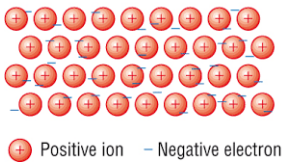
1) Compare the bonding in H_2 and HCl

H_2 – Hydrogen is bonding covalently – so describe covalent bonding – sharing electrons HCl – In this case hydrogen is behaving like a metal and bonding ionically – so electrons are transferring and electrostatic forces are holding the compound together. You need to describe clearly sing keywords such as – electrons, sharing, electrostatic charges, ions.

Describe
Students may be asked to recall some facts, events or process in an accurate way.

2) Describe the bonding in metals

You could include a diagram to help you. The key facts are: Neat rows of positively charged ions surrounded by a sea of free (or delocalised) electrons.



Explain
Students should make something clear, or state the reasons for something happening.

3) Explain the difference in the properties of a metal and an alloy

You will need to include information about the bonding in a metal Neat rows of positively charged ions surrounded by a sea of free (or delocalised) electrons.

A diagram would help to support your description. Also you need to explain the bonding in an alloy – neat rows are distorted by the addition of another atom. This gives the alloy different properties eg higher melting points, stronger etc.