Example A level Student Work – Economics

The following gives some examples of the level of work covered in A level Economics in Years 12-13 including details of how we expect students to set out their work and engage with feedback received. Students who follow these steps, review which of the assessment objectives requires the most development and responds to the individual feedback they have been given, will make the best progress.

Assessment objectives

A level Economics assesses the use of four key skills -
1. Knowledge (K) - Knowledge involves the correct use of theory / terminology showing not only accuracy, but full development of concepts.
2. Application (Ap) - Application involves combining knowledge with an appropriate case study.
3. Analysis (An) - The core of good analysis is the explanation of a situation / issue / problem through a logical sequence of linked ideas. It involves the use of relevant concepts and theories (including diagrams).
4. Evaluation (Ev) - Evaluation involves judging the significance of an analysis point. It can also require making a relevant and informed judgement / recommendation / decision.
These form the basis for the marking of all the assessments in the course (although not all are assessed in each task).

Classwork and homework

Details of termly assessments and feedback can be found on the assessment grid at the front of a student's folder. This will include details such as what skills did they demonstrate in this task, the mark achieved, targets for improvement (including those from the teacher's oral feedback), how they are going to achieve the target (including any assistance they may require from their teacher) and when did they achieve the target (including evidence).

These assessments routinely include -
1. Knowledge Review Tests - Knowledge tests (also involving basic application and analysis) take place on topics throughout the course (sometimes combined with an extended question in Y13). Answers are teacher assessed using mark schemes. Feedback methods include students correcting mistakes using green pen and / or the completion of a self-evaluation of how to improve the target skill in the future (when appropriate).
2. Workbook checks - Theory workbook checks take place half-termly to assess completion of the workbook. Theory Workbooks are graded E(Excellent), G(Good), M(Minimal) or P(Poor) and if appropriate targets are set for completion. Students then complete improvements (to be checked in the next workbook check).
3. Organisation Task - Folder checks take place termly to assess the organisation of a student's folder. Students then complete any improvements highlighted (to be checked in the next term).
4. Creative Tasks (Y12 only) - Creative tasks include a report into who is the most important historical economist and a new tax suggestion to be considered by the Chancellor. The teacher provides a mark based on a set criterion (these are available in the student's Assessments and Tasks workbooks). An appropriate target skill (from Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation) is selected and an improvement suggested. Feedback methods include a student correcting mistakes using green pen and the completion of an improvement paragraph (oral feedback then provided).

5. Extended writing questions - A level Economics examinations have a consistent set of command words for extended writing questions. They include examine, assess, discuss and evaluate. Each has different mark allocations and generally a level-based marking criterion. More details of each command word can be found in the student's A level handbook (to be found in their Theme 1 or Theme 3 folder). They all essentially require the development of an appropriate number of 'analysis' and 'evaluation' paragraphs.

The teacher marking follows the same practice as terminal examiners. Teachers identify the key skills being used for each question and either allocate a mark or level depending on the command word. The teacher will identify when a skill has been achieved either through a tick or a shortened version of the key skills (e.g. K, Ap, An, Ev).
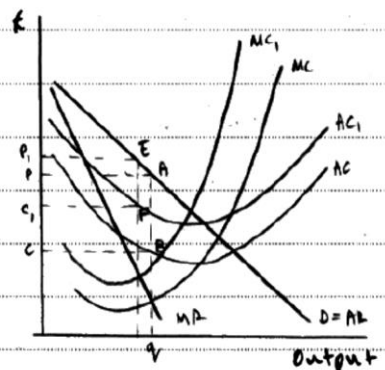
Example Year 13 top level analysis and evaluation paragraph -

Knowledge (K) - The knowledge factor is normally identified in the first sentence of the 'analysis' paragraph.

Application (Ap) - The 'analysis' paragraph links to an appropriate case study.

Analysis (An) - The factor has a full chain of reasoning that normally involves a diagram. This skill also requires the use of appropriate and accurate knowledge.
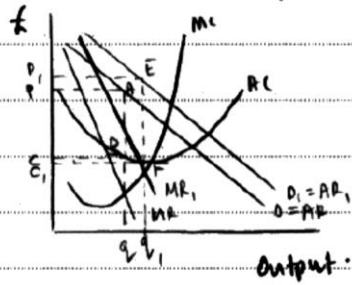
> One microeconomic effect of a depreciation in the pound is lower supernormal profits for businesses. Restaurants ~~and~~ ~~are line~~ ~~and delivery~~ ~~businesses~~ are likely to import a large number of their raw materials from abroad - for instance, for restaurants in the UK 'over half of their food and drink is sourced outside the UK'. A depreciation of the pound means more pounds are needed to buy a given amount of any foreign currency, making imports more expensive. This means the '20% fall in the ~~pound~~ external value of the pound since 2016' is likely to have led to ~~an~~ significant increase in ~~fixed costs for~~ variable costs for restaurants in the UK.

> The diagram shows how an increase in variable costs $(AC \rightarrow AC_1$ and $MC \rightarrow MC_1)$ reduces supernormal profits for UK restaurants from area pAB_c to area $P_1 EF_{c_1}$.

However, due to the price inelastic demand for restaurant services, restaurants should be able to pass on the majority of the burden from increased costs to consumers, and therefore may not see a large erosion in their profit margins and hence may not face hugely reduced supernormal profit. Furthermore, the increased price of overseas raw materials gives restaurants the opportunity to source food locally, which could actually increase their demand (eg there is higher demand for restaurants with B that use British beef). The diagram shows how this increase in demand can actually increase supernormal profits from area $pABc$ to area p_1EFc_1.

When full marks / the top level is not awarded the marking will clearly show the key skill missing from the answer, e.g. L**2Ap** would indicate a level 2 'analysis' paragraph where application would need to be improved. It may also be recorded at the end of the answer.

Feedback methods include a key skill for improvement identified, reviewing a peer's response (when appropriate), students correcting mistakes using green pen, a student completing an improvement question / paragraph (oral feedback then provided) or the completion of a self-evaluation of how to improve the target skill in the future (when appropriate).