

WRITING AN ESSAY

1. When you are given the exam don't panic. Read the entire exam slowly. Gauge the amount of time you will need to answer each question. Then choose the question you know most about to answer first.
2. Don't write the first thing that comes to your mind. Read the question slowly, and be sure you understand it.
3. Determine how you will answer the question and the central points you wish to make.
4. Write these central points or even a full outline in the margin of the exam booklet, and, as you compose each sentence of your answer, make sure that it relates to one of these points.
5. Your answer must follow the question. Be as specific or general, as concrete or reflective, as the question suggests. Never allow your answer to wander away from the focus of the question.
6. Don't repeat yourself. Each sentence should add new material or advance a line of argument.
7. Where necessary, refer to the facts that support the points you are making. You must also give evidence that you have thought about the question in broad terms. The mere relation of a series of facts will rarely earn you a high grade.
8. Toward the end of your answer, you may wish to include your own opinion. This is fine, even desirable, but be sure that your answer as a whole supports this opinion.
9. Always reread and correct an answer after it is finished. The pressure of an exam can often cause you to write sentences that are not clear.
10. Write legibly, or your grader will be in no mood to give you the benefit of any doubts.