

ADVICE ON WRITING THE FINAL EXAM ESSAY

The Final Exam Essay is your chance to prove that you have achieved a major objective of the course-- learning to write or critique an argument in a timed period. The essay should give evidence that you can back up generalizations with concrete evidence, arrange your ideas clearly, write using standard English, and do it all on short notice. You will have 100 minutes to write.

Procedures

1. The Final Exam Essay is written during the final exam period for this course. This semester it is scheduled **Tuesday, May 4, at 8 a.m.** Our class will be in ADM-331.
2. Please bring two pens, and, if you like, a dictionary, thesaurus, and *The Little, Brown Compact Handbok* or some combination of these books. Also, bring your reader packet.
3. Don't tear pages out of a blue book. If you botch a page and want to start over, draw a large X across the page and move on.
4. To help the graders read your work more easily, please
 - use standard margins (the pages are ruled to indicate margins);
 - only write on one side of the page; and
 - if you fill all the pages in your book, write on the backs of pages, beginning with the back of the last page and working towards the front.
5. As with any timed writing, do not recopy. You may use crossouts, carats, arrows, and white out tape as needed to make corrections and insertions.

Rhetoric and Style

1. Invent your own title for the essay. Don't set it off with quotation marks or underscoring.
2. Have a clear structure to your essay. Be sure to have a distinct introduction and a distinct conclusion.
3. To help keep your structure clear, make an organizational plan or "outline" before you begin to write. The inside cover of the blue book or the topic sheet is a good place to do this. The assignment does not require an outline, and the presence or absence of one will not affect your grade. But as you know, you will most likely be more effective if you have a general plan.
4. Because your audience will be tired English professors, you will most likely want to state your thesis overtly in your introductory paragraph. Then see that each paragraph relates to it. Also helpful are transition phrases at the start of each paragraph so that your reader goes smoothly from one major point to another.
5. Because course papers are to be written in moderately formal style for an audience of English teachers, avoid overusing slang. Take care not to confuse "you" for "one." You can, though, use contractions and use first person as it seems appropriate.

6. Include specific details to back up your general statements. Often superior development makes the difference between the "C-" paper and the "B" paper. *While you do not need to set up a works cited page (because of the short amount of time you have), you **do** need to cite the sources you use using parenthetical in-text citation.*
7. Proofread forward for organization; proofread backwards for grammar (starting with the last sentence on the last page and working, sentence by sentence, to the beginning of the paper). If possible, proofread "aloud" in your head. Common errors which "jolt" many teachers include comma splices and sentence fragments (especially disturbing to some teachers) and excessive misspellings (a few errors will be overlooked and accepted under the pressures of the essay but a large number will show a lack of concern for the content)
8. Pace yourself. An incomplete essay cannot have a good grade. Allow yourself 10 minutes to plan the essay, 80 minutes to write the essay, and 10 minutes to proofread and correct errors.