
How to Prepare for Essay Tests

Here are some tips for taking essay tests that you can share with your mentee. Essay tests can be very difficult for students because they are required not only to provide information but also to structure it in a coherent fashion. Practicing these techniques with your mentee will help him or her gain a great deal of confidence.

1. **Keep Track of Your Time**

If you have five questions to answer in 40 minutes, make certain you don't spend too much time on any one question.

2. **Read Through the Questions Once**

By familiarizing yourself with all the questions at the outset, you will have much more time to consider your answers.

3. **Identify the Directive Words**

Read the directions carefully and pinpoint the key terms. If a teacher wants you to describe, then do so. If she wants you to evaluate, then don't worry so much about description.

4. **Outline Your Answer First**

Whether teachers acknowledge it or not, they are greatly influenced by the coherence and structure of your answer. To list facts in random order makes it seem as if you do not have a clear grasp of the material. Try to organize your answers as well as you can.

5. **Take Time to Write an Introduction and Conclusion**

A good introduction and conclusion are essential parts of a good essay. They give your responses the appearance of being logical arguments.