

Guidelines for Writing

Free Response Essay Guide

These are the steps that you should follow in developing a strong free response essay.

1. Underline the verb and do what the verb tells you to do. *For example:*

- 1. Relative** means to rank.
- 2. Evaluate** means to make a judgment based on strengths and weaknesses of evidence.
- 3. Analyze** means to identify motives, make inferences, and find evidence to support generalizations.
- 4. Assess** means to judge the value or worth.

2. What will be your thesis to answer the question?

3. Come up with three things or categories that will prove your argument.

Sometimes the question already comes with the categories. For example, if I asked you to compare the three different colonial regions that would clearly categorize your essay. Sometimes you have to create your own categories based on the question being asked. For example, as with essay #1 you are expected to know there are three distinct geographic regions from which you can assess the validity: New England, Middle and Southern colonies.

4. Brainstorm.

For each category, write all the factual information that you can think of that is connected to the category. (That is: *people, events, dates, laws, ideas, groups, Supreme Court Cases...*)

5. Write your essay.

First Paragraph: This should tell the reader what they will find they in the rest of your essay. It is really an outline of your essay. If it is not mentioned in the first paragraph, then it should not be discussed in the essay. A good opening paragraph should make the rest of the essay easy to write.

First Paragraph:

- Begin with a general statement that will introduce the reader to the material.
- The next sentence should be a summary of the 1st category.
- The next sentence should be a summary of the 2nd category.
- The next sentence should be a summary of the 3rd category.
- The very last sentence must contain your thesis statement, which presents your argument by referring to each of the three categories.

Second Paragraph:

- Discuss the 1st category in detail

Third Paragraph:

- Discuss the 2nd category in detail

Fourth Paragraph:

- Discuss the 3rd category in detail

Fifth Paragraph:

- This should be your conclusion. Here you will summarize in 3-4 sentences how you proved your argument with the information you provided.