

Test Taking: Longwood University Center for Academic Success **Subjective Tests**

Steps to Answering an Essay Question

1. Clarity: Make sure you understand the question
2. Know: Necessary facts & supporting materials
3. Apply: Ability to apply reasoning and understanding to course materials

Preparing Before You Answer an Essay Question

1. Make notes on back of test to free your mind
2. Read directions carefully
 - Do you have a choice (ex: respond to 3 out of 5 questions)
3. Read everything
 - Read all the questions: choose questions you're best prepared for
 - Circle key words as you read
4. Jot clues alongside each question to help you organize thoughts before writing
5. Plan your time
 - Don't use extra time for difficult questions
6. Start with the easiest question—this builds confidence!

How to Answer an Essay Question

1. Understand question with precision—what idea are they getting at?
2. Be explicit and complete
 - Define terms as you write
 - Don't allow inferring or concluding
3. Eliminate impressions or feelings
 - Avoid phony & fancy writing...be real
4. Be concise
 - Direct and straightforward is most impressive, avoid being wordy
5. Spell correctly
 - Avoid misspelled words & grammatical errors (edit your work)
6. One idea per paragraph
 - Be organized
 - Write deductive paragraphs: State idea clearly then support with facts
7. Understand "pet ideas"
 - Instructors use only a few basic approaches