

STR.3 On one's memory for basic facts.

STR.4 Students understand and apply that knowledge in things

by creating a brief sentence outline when preparing
questions. In the outline, focus on the main points that should
and the specifics that are needed to support each main

EXAM:

Before writing an answer, read through the whole exam

read through the question, jot down any information that
d.

time. Make sure you allot roughly the same amount of
er each question on the test. **First answer the question**

as best.

Read the question carefully and determine exactly what you are

to do. Underline cue and key words in the question and

writing instructions.

When you write. Take a few minutes to jot down ideas and then

answer

The following information was adapted from The Allyn & Bacon Handbook. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1994. 745.

To write good answers to essay questions, a writer must clearly understand the meanings of the key words used in the question. If a question asks that you describe an event, then simply relaying background information may satisfactorily answer the question. However, if a question asks that you compare and contrast two historical events, and you simply describe the events, then you have not provided a complete answer to the question. Usually, answers to essay questions only receive complete credit if they directly answer the question that was asked. Therefore, make sure you carefully read each question and understand what it is asking.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS ARE FREQUENTLY USED IN ESSAY EXAMINATIONS:

Analyze means to separate something into parts and then discuss the parts and their meanings.

Clarify means to make clear by giving examples or definitions.

Classify means to arrange by groups based on shared characteristics.

Compare and contrast means to discuss similarities and differences.

Criticize means to pass judgment on something.

Interpret means to make plain or explain the meaning of something.

Justify means to give evidence in support of your position.

Prove means to establish the validity of something by presenting factual information or logical reasons.

Relate means to demonstrate the connections among people, events, ideas, or things.

Review means to reanalyze something and comment or explain it.

Summarize means to retell briefly the main points of something.

Support means to give strong evidence in favor of something.

Trace means to give the development, sequence, or progress of something.

Sources:

“How to Take an Essay Exam.” UMKC Writing Lab.

Rosen, Leonard, and Laurence Behrens. The Allyn & Bacon Handbook. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1994.

Troyka, Lynn. Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers. Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.