The Essay Test

Preparing to take the test
• Review reading, lecture notes, handouts.
• Write sample questions covering major points and practice answering them.
• Familiarize yourself with key terms that may appear on tests (See reverse side of handout.)

Taking the test
• Read the directions. Look for how many questions must be answered and point value.
• Answer the question you are most confident about first.
• Organize before you begin to write. Take time to collect what you know and form a thesis. Use the inside covers of your blue book to list your ideas.
• Rephrase the question to form an affirmative statement. Example: In what ways did labor unions affect economic growth in the 1980s?
  Thesis: Labor unions affected growth in the areas of ____________.
• Read over each paragraph as you write. Make certain you continue to answer the question.
• Look over your answer for last minute additions and corrections
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<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>HOW TO:</th>
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| Define: Asks you to determine the qualities of a concept or thing | Define a democratic society | 1. Break the concept down into its parts  
2. Attribute characteristics  
3. Give examples  
4. State the functions |
| Compare: Asks you to tell how two things are a like and/or different in specific categories | Compare the Democratic and Republican party platforms on health care. | 1. Break the issue /event into specific parts  
2. For each part, explain how x and y are alike and/or different |
| Trace: Asks you to relate in chronological order the steps that lead to x; tell how each step is significant | Trace the development of the open-classroom concept in education. | 1. Identify major steps, events, ideas  
2. Show specifically why or how each item changes the concept or leads to the next |
| Analyze: Asks you to break a concept or idea into its parts | Analyze the plots of the short story “The Lottery.” | 1. Break the concept down into its separate parts  
2. Relate how the parts are connected |
| Discuss: Asks you to determine the most important feature or ideas related to a subject | Discuss the world view of Columbus as he prepared to voyage to the Indies. | 1. Describe the idea in detail  
2. Provide examples  
3. Compare it to something that came before or after. |
| Agree or Disagree: Asks you to support or refute a statement | Critics claim that television news is poor journalism. | 1. Define the ideal  
2. Ask yourself how the particulars of this case compare to the ideal  
3. Draw a conclusion: this is your thesis |