

**The Law School Exam
Attack Plan for Essay Exams.**

1. **Be prepared.** Have a plan to achieve mastery of the material and to get yourself in tip-top physical condition to take your exams. Eat healthy meals and get plenty of sleep. Also, make sure all your technology works before you show up. Cultivate in yourself a positive mindset. You can do this!
2. **Read the instructions.** Instructions provide all kind of useful info. Look for point values, suggested time limits, and word limits.
3. **Get the lay of the land.** You should always try to get information on what your exam will look like before exam day. However, if no information was provided, the first thing you should do is skim the exam and understand what kind of exam it is and how many questions you will face. **Look at all the pages – front and back!**
4. **Manage your time or it will manage you!** Failure to make and keep a time plan is one of the most costly mistakes law students make. Make a plan and then stick to it. Typically students spend 10-20% of the time reading and preparing to answer the question.
5. **Read the call of the question first.** This can help frame what facts you should be focused on when you read the whole question. If a specific question(s) is posed make sure you answer it.
 - a. **If the call of the question provides a specific question make sure you answer it directly.** Ex. Identify the strongest tort cause of action. You can do this by doing a short introductory sentence or paragraph at the top.
6. **Deep read.** Read the question start to finish. Don't make notes, just read for context and understanding.
7. **Re-read.** This time feel free to be an active reader. Highlight. Underline. Take notes in the margin. Etc.
8. **I. P. O. Identify, Prioritize, Organize.**
 - a. **Identify Issues.**
 - i. Look for trigger facts
 - ii. Work through a mental checklist of issues if you are stuck.
 - iii. Make quick notes in margin.

- b. Prioritize.** After you are comfortable that you have spotted all the issue put a star by the ones that you feel are the most important in terms of points. Keep in mind that you should spend more time and words on issues that the facts are signaling as more important. **This is a judgment call. There is no magic formula.**
- c. Organize.** Decide on the order in which to address the issues. This can be done by simply numbering the issues you spot on your notes in the margin or by making a quick outline on scratch paper. Think about using headings that identify the issue, such as **“Slick’s battery claim against Sam – gun shot.”**
- d. If you start to panic: Remember the ABCs**

 - i. Acknowledge what is happening.**
 - ii. Breathe!** (5 Second inhalation, hold breath for 1 second, 5 second exhalation. Repeat 5 times).
 - iii. Checklists:** Reread and look for trigger facts. Use your mental checklist.
- 9. Write for points!** Remember, your conclusion is important, but not as important as your analysis. Write for points. 1) Fully explain rules and sub rules, 2) consider discussing different jurisdictional approaches, 3) point out reasonable counter arguments, and, 4) if the professor wants you to uses cases, use them!
- 10. Keep in mind your professor’s preferences.** For example, Prof. CBJ likes transitions between issues. Like this, “The second issue addressed will be ... (whether... under... when....)”
- 11. Attack.** Implement your plan and start writing.
- 12. Evaluate.** Once you are done reread the call of the question and ask yourself if you did everything you need to do address it directly. If you have time, skim your answer and the question to make sure you are not missing anything big.
- 13. Proof.** Don’t even try to proof as you write. You will likely waste time. Save 5% of your time for this at the end of your time plan if you can.

Pro tip—make your answers reader friendly. Use headings and lots of paragraphs.
- 14. Leave and do not discuss the exam.** Do yourself a favor and don’t discuss exams with fellow students.
- 15. Go home rest and recover.**