

## 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 tech 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!

This is a good time to plan a time management strategy.

4. **Read the call of the question first.** This can help frame what facts you should be focused on when you read the whole question.
5. **Deep read.** Read the question start to finish. Don't make notes, just read for context and understanding.
6. **Re-read.** This time feel free to be an active reader. Highlight. Underline. Et Cetera.
7. **Plan.** As you are re-reading you should be making notes about issues and important facts. This should look like a very brief outline. After you are feel comfortable you have spotted all the issue, decide on the order in which to address them. This can be done by simply numbering the issues you spot on your outline in the order that you plan on attacking them in your answer. Keep in mind that you should spend more time and space on issues that the facts are signaling as more important. **This is a judgment call. There is no magic formula.**

**Look to see if you can combine analysis.**

8. **Attack.** Implement your plan and start writing.
9. **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.

**10. Proof.** Don't even try to proof as you write. You will likely waste time. Save 5 to 10 minutes at the end for this. Your professor may complain about grammar and style but in the end it is the substance that counts most. Pro tip—make your answers reader friendly— try headings and short introductory paragraphs. Remember, perfect prose is not achievable in exam conditions.

**11. Leave and do not discuss the exam.** (You will probably ignore this advice but I give it any way). Here is the problem—you will probably learn to your horror that your best friend discussed Issue A and did not discuss Issue B (which you thought was the key issue). In fact, you didn't discuss Issue A at all because you didn't see it. You will also find out that you came to a different conclusion on Issue C. Panic will increase, you will doubt yourself, and your confidence will be impacted. This is a bad cycle and largely serves no purposes. You still might have done "A" work! Remember, law school exams care less about conclusions and more about analysis. It is also sometimes impossible to address every issue contained on an exam. Do yourself a favor and don't discuss exams.

**12. Go home rest and recover.**