

How to Ace a Timed Impromptu Essay

For a 50 or 60 minute essay, make use of your time in the following manner.

1. First 10 minutes, prewriting.

First minute: Read the question carefully. Note and mark with an * each part of the question.

Second minute: Underline the key directional words (analyze, discuss, compare, contrast, explain, tell, expand, etc.).

Say these words to yourself to focus your thinking.

Third - Fourth minute: Begin brainstorming, mind-mapping, listing, clustering, or freewriting anything and everything that comes to mind *without censoring*. Spend 1 to 2 minutes on this step.

Fifth - Tenth minute: Organize your brainstorm material and put in a logical order.

Use an ordered list, an outline, a numbered cluster, or a flowchart. Just be sure that the order is logical and clear.

2. Next 25 – 30 minutes, writing the body.

Leave at least one page (or partial page in test booklet) for the title and introduction, which will be added last.

Begin writing by following your ordered list or cluster.

Cover each part of the question with a separate paragraph.

Be sure to double-space (write on every other line) and write on only one side of the page unless instructed not to do so.

Answer all parts of the question. Focus.

Use pertinent details, examples and observations.

3. Next 5 or 10 minutes, completion.

Write the conclusion to your essay body.

Now, go back and write an introduction which ties in the body and conclusion. Write a meaningful title. The title adds punch and emphasis.

4. Last 10 Minutes, fine-tuning.

Edit your work. Go over what you have written from the *bottom up*. READ THE LAST SENTENCE BY ITSELF. NEXT, READ THE NEXT-TO-LAST SENTENCE BY ITSELF, AND SO ON UNTIL YOU REACH THE BEGINNING OF YOUR ESSAY! Make any needed changes to sentence structure. Add missing information needed for clarity.

Proofread for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Make sure your name is on the essay and turn it in when finished.