

Subjective and Essay Taking Tips



Preview the test	Note the total number of items. Identify point values. Judge the amount of time you should spend on each item. Spend the most time on questions that receive the most credit.
Read directions carefully	It is a mistake to ignore test directions. Directions provide information you need to get full credit and to mark answers correctly. Underline key terms and number steps in the directions.
Determine what the question is asking	Answer the question, the whole question and nothing but the question. Look for multiple tasks. Identify key words (see list on back).
Outline or map your response	Jot down key information you know about the topic in a skeleton outline or concept map.
Define your thesis statement	Based on what the question is asking. Be direct and explicit: that means giving a clear and relevant argument. I am writing about _____ and I am going to show _____.
Introduction	The first paragraph is vital. Do 4 things: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Analyze the question, define its meaning and establish its parameters;2. Sub-divide question into smaller areas (for which you will subsequently have a paragraph);3. Outline your argument4. Create a dramatic first sentence to interest the reader.
Body	In the middle paragraphs, deal with one relevant issue per paragraph. Each middle paragraph should have an argument, interpretation or generalization supported by evidence. You must always give both. Try to give the argument in the first sentence(s) and then 'prove' it with the best details.
Conclusion	The final paragraph is also vital. Return to the actual wording of the question and answer it as directly and succinctly as possible. Make sure it's consistent with what you've written earlier. Analyze what you said in your essay.
Use real facts	Provide evidence and not just opinions
Use good writing	Don't use slang or abbreviations in your writing and proofread your answers. Use transitional words such as next, finally, meanwhile, soon, in addition, etc
Provide References	Never try to pass off other's work as your own: plagiarism, even of phrases, is unacceptable.

Adapted from: Pearce, Robert from History Review, a journal for English students reading the History A-level.