

### In-Class Essay Exams

- These are timed exams that are given in a classroom environment. They typically ask you to answer questions from a given prompt.

### How do I prepare?


- Actively attend lectures and take notes.
- Review notes and look for connections between concepts.
- Gather information on the essay type. (compare and contrast, persuasive, argumentative, etc.)
- Brainstorm sample prompts based on course themes.
- Review previous writing feedback to determine what your instructor expects.
- Make sure to take some time to rest to avoid burnout.

### During the Exam

- Remember to breathe and affirm yourself that you are capable of success.
- Budget your time.
  - Example: if given 75 minutes: spend 15 min planning, 50 min writing, and 10 minutes to review.
  - Example: if given 50 minutes: spend 3.5 min evaluating prompt, 3.5 min brainstorming, 8 min making a outline, 30 min writing, and 5 min proofreading.
- Read the prompt carefully and look for keywords.
- Narrow your topic down and develop a thesis statement.
- Provide a preview of how you will arrange your essay.
- Put ideas in a logical order by including topic sentences and transitions.

### Exam Question Keywords (*from GMU Writing Center*)

- **Analyze:** Break a topic into its parts. Identify the parts and demonstrate how they relate to each other to make the whole.
- **Compare:** Give detailed similarities and differences between two ideas and tell why these similarities or differences are important or significant to overall meaning.
- **Define:** Tell what a concept/thing/event is and what it is not. Place it in a general class or group, and then explain how it is different from other members of that class or group.
- **Discuss/Examine:** The most vague of directions, this asks you to find relationships between ideas, evaluate situations, and/or interpret statements.
- **Evaluate/Assess:** Make a judgment about something; this leaves room for you to present more than one view on a position.
- **Explain:** Find a relationship between things, and explain how and why this relationship works.
- **Illustrate:** Use details/examples to show relationships between things.
- **Interpret:** Translate what something means or explain what an author means.
- **Outline/Trace/Review:** Organize main and subordinate points to classify the elements or stages of development of a concept/thing/event.
- **Prove:** Declare a point of view about a topic; then give reasons for believing it.

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**References**

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- Sun, K. (2018, February 13). *5 tips for writing an in-class essay*. The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus Writing Center. <https://students.ubc.ca/ubclife/5-tips-writing-class-essay>