

TEXAS | WRITING STATE | CENTER

In-class Essay Tips

- 1. Use the Writing Center.**
 - Make an appointment on our website: writingcenter.txstate.edu
 - Bring your notes, texts, and test review materials to your appointment.
- 2. Study your notes and make outlines.**
 - If your instructor gives you the question before exam day, prepare by outlining the essay you plan to use.
 - If your instructor does not provide the question in advance, study your notes and look for common themes. Try to imagine based on these themes what kind of question your professor might ask.
- 3. Get a good night's rest and try to eat before you take the exam.**
 - Sleep helps you synthesize and remember the information that you've learned during a study session.
 - Sleep improves focus, memory, and concentration.
- 4. Start where you're comfortable**
 - Don't feel as if you must start with the essay question.
 - You may get ideas for your essay while answering multiple-choice or short-answer questions.
- 5. Outline key points that answer the essay question.**
- 6. Develop a specific thesis statement that includes your key points.**
 - Your thesis statement should answer the question or questions that the essay exam asks.
 - It needs to be specific, manageable, and arguable.
 - It should also answer the question, "So what?" (This is what an instructor means when she or he asks you to "discuss the significance.")
- 7. Use PIE to outline and write your key points in body paragraphs.**
 - Point: Your topic sentence that addresses *one* key point.
 - Illustration: An example or examples that support your key point.
 - Explanation: Explain how your key point is proven by the illustration *and* relate it back to your thesis statement.
- 8. Focus on your thesis statement and body paragraphs, *not* your introduction and conclusion.**