Preparation for an Essay Exam

1. Examine the instructions, noting key words and verbs.

Verbs that cue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Divide the subject into sections and discuss each point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classify</td>
<td>Organize the topic into groups according to similar attributes and roles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criticize</td>
<td>State your opinion about the subject and explain your reasons for being for or against the subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare (usually with contrast)</td>
<td>Demonstrate the similar and the different attributes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Give a meaning or explain what something is to distinguish it from other topics or subjects like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Think and talk about the subject with its different issues and aspects in a structured manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Clarify a complicated object or method that needs to be understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Explain what a certain topic or subject means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Examine the value of something or critically summarize the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Give the significant points of a topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Debate and give reasons for the topic.</td>
</tr>
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(Troyka 110)

2. Create a Thesis Statement
   - Narrow your thesis down until it is not too broad.

3. Determine at least four or five major supporting points and focus on the strongest three.

4. Make certain your points
   A. Logically support your thesis
   B. Are objective and creditable

5. Carefully review the question and practice writing the answer.
   A. Remember to follow the correct format.
   B. Outline your supporting points to help you remember your central supporting arguments.
   C. Memorize your thesis.

6. The format for an Essay Exam should be the same as that of a persuasive essay.
1. Introduction with thesis statement
2. Paragraph with the first supporting point
3. Paragraph with the second supporting point
4. Paragraph with the third supporting point
5. Conclusion restating thesis statement

7. Focus on your thesis initially rather than a title.

8. Remember to write formally

   A. Write in the third person (do not use “I, my, me, or mine”).
   B. Do not include slang or contractions.
   C. Avoid clichés and over-used expressions
   D. Proofread for the following:
      1. Appropriateness (Does it apply?)
      2. Unity and Focus (Is it too broad or general?)
      3. Development (Does it develop naturally and logically?)
      4. Organization (Is the essay structured well?)
      5. Sentence Structure (Does each sentence make sense?)
      6. Punctuation (Commas, periods, question marks, etc.)
      7. Spelling Errors and Typos

9. Be certain to schedule your time during the exam.
   A. Be certain to spend a certain amount of time for each paragraph.
   B. Be sure to leave time for proofreading your essay.

Websites to help you prepare:
1) http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_essay.html
2) http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/essay_exam.shtml
Work Cited