

Mount 101 Tips: Essay Questions on Tests and Exams

An essay question asks you to make connections between the course content and learning objectives, course themes, and/or practical and theoretical perspectives from the class. If you're asked to write an essay for an exam or midterm, you will have to answer a question in paragraph form. Your answer should include a **thesis** and **supporting evidence** along with an **analysis** of that evidence.

Other things to consider when answering essay questions:

Study by thinking about possible questions and how you can answer them

Look through the course material for common themes, learning objectives, and anything your professor emphasized to draft possible questions. Create a draft outline and focus on remembering key points.

Read the question carefully

Focus on instructions (e.g., answer two of the three questions) and [any keywords](#) (especially verbs). If you're having trouble understanding the question, try putting it in your own words or ask your professor

Organize your thoughts

Take 5 minutes before you start writing your answer and create an essay outline. Include a thesis that answers the question, key points, and evidence to support your argument. Refer back to your outline as you're writing your answer.

Focus your discussion

Make your points easy to find and explain how everything fits together. This is where you'll show your professor the connections you've made and will highlight what you know about the material.

Sources:

Dal Student Life. (Retrieved August 2019). *How to Ace Short Answer and Essay Exams*. Retrieved from: <https://blogs.dal.ca/dalstudentlife/2019/04/02/how-to-ace-short-answer-and-essay-exams/>