



# Writing Application

## Writing Essay Tests

Essay tests are an inevitable part of a student's life. Learn how to cope with them so that you don't dread them. The advantage of an essay over a multiple-choice test is that you can bring in the information you know.

In an examination setting, you have to write quickly and on an assigned topic. You do not have much time for generating ideas, drafting, and revising. You need to pare down the process to the minimum. Generating and organizing ideas are still important, but now you will work within a time frame of half an hour or an hour or two—rather than days or even weeks. Knowing the material of the course thoroughly is a distinct advantage, allowing you to choose the facts and ideas you need and present them clearly. Use the following list of key terms to assist you in developing your strategy.

Analyze	<i>divide into parts and discuss each part</i>
Argue	<i>express an opinion and defend it with evidence</i>
Classify	<i>organize people, objects, or concepts into groups</i>
Compare	<i>point out similarities</i>
Contrast	<i>point out differences</i>
Define	<i>give the meaning of</i>
Discuss	<i>state important characteristics and main points</i>
Evaluate	<i>define criteria for judgment and examine good and bad points, strengths and weaknesses</i>
Explain	<i>give reasons or make clear by analyzing, defining, contrasting, illustrating, and so on</i>
Illustrate	<i>give examples from experience and reading</i>
Relate	<i>point out and discuss connections</i>

*As adapted from Raimes, Ann. 1999. Keys for Writers: A Brief Handbook, 2nd Ed. Houghton-Mifflin. Boston.*