# In-Class Essays

# What are in-class essays?

An in-class essay requires students to compose an essay on the spot within an allotted time. Perhaps the most important thing in writing an in-class essay is to manage that time wisely. Professors may or may not provide a prompt ahead of time, so it is best to be prepared for both instances.

# How can students prepare?

* Check when the in-class essay will occur by looking ahead on the syllabus.
* Review announcements about the upcoming in-class essay for clues on how to prepare.
* Review class notes, assigned readings, and graded papers from your instructor. Re-writing key information can help with retention.
* Based on your best guess of the topic (possibly the themes discussed in class or readings), create an outline, use flashcards to memorize useful quotes, and prewrite your essay at home.
* Know the components of an essay:
  + Introductory paragraph with thesis statement
  + Body paragraphs with topic sentences
  + Supporting details
  + Transitions
  + Conclusion

The day of the in-class essay:

* Bring paper (or a blue book) and writing utensils. Pen or pencil is up to the professor.
* Read over the prompts carefully and more than once.
* Write on one side of the page, skipping lines.
* Write the essay, organizing it from strongest to weakest point.
* Re-read the prompt before concluding to make sure everything has been addressed.

Time management during in-class essay writing

**Step 1** (8 minutes)

Read prompt, brainstorm, & write a brief plan.

**Step 2** (7 minutes)

Determine thesis, & write introduction.

**Step 3** (30 minutes)

Begin writing the body of the essay, & remember to refer to your plan.

**Step 4** (7 minutes)

Check prompt for missing points & write conclusion.

**Step 5** (8 minutes)

Proofread & edit.

# Exercise

**Use this side to help you organize your ideas on the day of your in-class essay. It is not a complete outline, but it can provide guidance and help keep the paragraphs organized. You may, of course, have more body paragraphs than indicated below.**

**Introduction**

* Hook Statement:
* Background Information:
* Thesis Statement:

**Body Paragraphs (there may be more or less than the provided spaces below)**

* Body Paragraph 1—Topic Sentence:
* Body Paragraph 2 —Topic Sentence:
* Body Paragraph 3—Topic Sentence:
* Body Paragraph 4—Topic Sentence:
* Body Paragraph 5—Topic Sentence:

**Conclusion**

* Reaffirmation of the argument (thesis):
* Closing statement: