

A Process for the Take-home Essay Exam

(1) understand the task

- read the question
- look for—and circle—directive verbs
- if the question seems to have multiple parts, number the parts

(2) collect ideas

- jot down anything that comes: generate a pool from which to select
- write on separate pages for separate parts of the question

(3) gather evidence

- go back to the text(s); find support for each of your ideas
- add new ideas as they present themselves to you; discard **ideas you** cannot support

(4) plan the organization of your response

- decide how best to group and present your ideas: in chronological order? in order of importance? by question part?
- keep in mind the basic structure of every formal essay

(5) produce your first draft

- write the body of your argument first
 then the conclusion
 then the introduction

(6) revise for organization and content

- work to make movement from one point to the next smooth, to make connections between ideas clear
- consider whether you need more—or more convincing--evidence

(7) produce your second draft

(8) edit; polish