



The QUOTE Strategy for Taking Essay Tests

Name: _____ Date: _____

QUOTE is a strategy that will help you to do well when taking essay tests. Each letter in the acronym stands for one of the five steps in QUOTE. Read through the following guidelines for taking essay tests:

- 1) **QUESTION** is the first step. Here you ask, "What is the direction word in the test item?" A direction word tells you what you must do to answer the item. Examples of direction words are discuss, describe, and explain.



- 2) **UNDERLINE** is the second step. Underline the words that help you focus on the ideas you will develop in your answer.

- 3) **ORGANIZE/OUTLINE** is the third step. Organize the facts, create an outline of your main ideas and write your answer.



- 4) **TIME** is the fourth step. Decide how much time you should spend answering each item.

- 5) **EVALUATE** is the fifth and final step. Evaluate the content and organization of what you wrote. Also evaluate your writing mechanics, grammar, and spelling.





Practicing the QUOTE Test Taking Strategy

STEP 1: Question is the first step you should apply in the **QUOTE** strategy for answering essay test items. Ask: “What is the direction word in the test item?” Identify and bracket [] the direction word. For example, look at how the direction word was bracketed in this essay test item:

The government of Canada has three branches; federal, provincial, and local. [Describe] the federal branch.

Bracket [] the direction word in each of the following essay test items.

1. Explain the process by which plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen.
2. Briefly describe how gravity affects your life.
3. Many people are concerned about our environment. Discuss why people want cars and trucks that burn cleaner fuel.



Here are more direction words used in essay test items. Read what each direction word tells you to do.

Discuss: Give reasons behind points of view
Describe: Present detailed picture of something in words.
Explain: Give the reason for something.
List: Present information in some order
Trace: State a series of events in logical order
Relate: Show how two or more things are related.
Diagram: Create a visual representation to show something.
Compare: Tell how two or more things are alike and different.
Criticize: Make positive and negative comments about something.
Evaluate: Judge the merits of something using certain criteria.
Summarize: State the major points about something.

Each of these essay test items is missing a direction word. Choose one of the direction words to complete each.

1. _____ the major ideas of the Conservative and Liberal party.
2. Pierre Elliot Trudeau was a popular prime minister of Canada.
_____ his performance as a prime minister.
3. The Civil War was fought between the northern state and the southern states. _____ the events that led to this war.



Practicing the QUOTE Test Taking Strategy

STEP 2: Underline is the second step you should apply in the QUOTE strategy answering essay test items. After you have bracketed [] the direction word, **underline** the words that help you focus on the ideas to develop in your answer. This example shows you how to do this.

The Great Depression was the worst economic period in Canadian history.
[Explain] why the Great Depression happened when it did.

For each essay test item, bracket the direction words and underline the words that help you focus on the ideas to develop in your answer.

1. Exercise should be an important part of everyone's life. Describe how exercise can help you to lead a healthy and satisfying life.
2. Controversy still exists about whether the United States was right to fight a war in Vietnam. Trace the events that lead to our involvement in the Vietnam War.
3. Communism remains a major economic and political system in many parts of the world. Compare the communist and democratic forms of government with respect to election of leaders.
4. Discuss the major positions taken by Stephen Harper as he campaigned to be prime minister in 2002
5. Canada's population density is relatively low in comparison to other countries. Explain why this is the case providing two reasons to support your answer.
6. Compare Adam Smith and Karl Marx's views about the free market or communism.





Practicing the QUOTE Test Taking Strategy

STEP 4: Time is the fourth step in the QUOTE strategy. For this step you must decide how much time to spend answering each item. Follow the this checklist:

- Determine the total time you have to complete the test.
- Consider how many points each item is worth. Plan to use more time for the items that count for the most points.
- Write in front of each item the amount of time you plan to use answering the item.
- Make sure that the time you plan for answering all items is not greater than the total time you have for the test.



STEP 5: Evaluate is the final step, make sure you check your answer for content, writing and mechanics and make any edits if necessary. Use the following checklist to help guide you:

Content:

- I answered all parts of the item.
- I included all the relevant facts.
- All my facts are accurate.

Writing:

- My answer begins with an introduction.
- My answer has supporting points.
- My answer ends with a conclusion.

Mechanics:

- My handwriting is legible.
- I spelled all words correctly.
- I used correct punctuation.
- I use correct grammar.



Use the above checklist to go over you answer above. Evaluate the content, writing, and mechanics of your essay test item.