

# Subjective and Essay Taking Tips



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| <b>Determine what the question is asking</b> | Answer the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question. Number multiple tasks and identify key words.  |
| <b>Outline or map your response</b>          | Jot down key information you know about the topic in a skeleton outline or concept map. If you were given the question in advance, make sure you created an outline in advance.   |
| <b>Define your thesis statement</b>          | Based on what the question is asking. Be direct and explicit: that means giving a clear and relevant argument.  |
| <b>Introduction</b>                          | The first paragraph is vital. Do 4 things: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Analyze the question, define its meaning and establish its parameters;</li><li>2. Sub-divide question into smaller areas (for which you will subsequently have a paragraph);</li><li>3. Outline your argument</li><li>4. Create a dramatic first sentence to interest the reader.</li></ol> |
| <b>Body</b>                                  | In the middle paragraphs, deal with one relevant issue per paragraph. Each middle paragraph should have an argument, interpretation or generalization supported by evidence. You must always give both. Try to give the argument in the first sentence(s) and then 'prove' it with the best details. Be sure to also explain how the evidence supports your argument.           |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                            | The final paragraph is also vital. Return to the actual wording of the question and answer it as directly and succinctly as possible. Make sure it's consistent with what you've written earlier. Explain why your argument is important within a larger context; think about why it is significant.  |
| <b>Use real facts</b>                        | Provide evidence, not just opinions.  |
| <b>Use good writing</b>                      | Don't use slang or abbreviations in your writing, and proofread your answers. Use transitional words such as next, finally, meanwhile, soon, in addition, etc   |
| <b>Provide references</b>                    | Never try to pass off other's work as your own: plagiarism, even of phrases, is unacceptable.   |
| <b>Online Test Taking</b>                    | If your subjective test is online, you may want to first type your response in another program you're comfortable with (Word, Google Docs, etc.) and then copy it over. If that is not an option, then make sure you are familiar with the tools and commands of the platform you are using.  |

Adapted from: Pearce, Robert from History Review, a journal for English students reading the History A-level.