

## Essay Test Taking Tips

### Plan Before You Write:

- ◆ Consider your audience (the instructor) and your purpose (to demonstrate that you understand the material).
- ◆ Read the entire examination to determine the time you should spend on each question.
- ◆ Read each question carefully and underline key words and concepts.
- ◆ Brainstorm and write down all the relevant information that you can remember.
- ◆ Develop a thesis and an outline for your response.

### Write and Revise:

- ◆ Follow your outline point by point.
- ◆ Use clear topic sentences and smooth transitions.
- ◆ Be sure to support all of your general statements with specific examples.
- ◆ Your conclusion should be a clear simple restatement of your thesis statement.
- ◆ Leave enough time to reread and revise what you have written.

### Quick Tips:

- ◆ Always read the full essay instructions before beginning.
- ◆ Know each question's point value.
- ◆ Be sure to answer the question you are being asked.
- ◆ Use the question to develop your thesis.
- ◆ Develop your thesis to set up the organization of your essay.
- ◆ Refer to elements of the question throughout your essay.
- ◆ Always read your answer and edit before you turn in your essay.

### Definition of Terms:

- ◆ *Compare*– to tell how two or more things are alike or similar.
- ◆ *Contrast*– to tell how two or more things are different.
- ◆ *Define*– to identify and state the essential traits or characteristics of something, differentiating it clearly from other things
- ◆ *Explain*– to clarify the meaning of something through reasons, examples, etc.
- ◆ *Discuss*– to examine a subject and show many perspectives and arguments.
- ◆ *Evaluate*– to examine and judge carefully in order to ascertain or fix the value or worth of (often implies that you need to develop specific criteria).
- ◆ *Analyze*– to divide an event, idea, or theory into its component elements and examine each one in turn.