

## FRQ Tips and Tricks

1. Before you start:
  - a. Read the prompt completely
  - b. Underline the key words and phrases you need to cover in your answer
  - c. Circle the direction words (describe, analyze, give an example, etc)
  - d. Write a brief outline at the beginning of your answer on the test paper, NOT by the prompt. If you run out of time, the reader may be able to use your outline to give you points!
2. Writing your answer
  - a. Mark your answer in the same format as the question (if it has parts 1a, 1b, and 1c, label your paragraphs 1a, 1b, and 1c)
  - b. Do not write a formal introduction or conclusion
  - c. Make your argument "PLUS ONE" – give one more example or argument than what is asked for in the prompt
  - d. State the obvious answer first, and be brilliant second
  - e. Don't assume the reader knows what you mean or will "fill in the gaps" – the reader is looking for a demonstration of your knowledge, not the chance to demonstrate their own knowledge
  - f. Be concise and clear. Don't try to hide a lack of knowledge in lots of flowery terms
  - g. Use examples from class, from the textbook, and from current events to support your arguments
  - h. Use appropriate terms and vocabulary!
  - i. Do not erase your mistakes. Just cross them off and move on
  - j. Do not worry about spelling and grammar. Small mistakes are okay. There are no points given or taken away for spelling and grammar!
  - k. Cross off the parts of the prompt as you answer them
3. After you finish
  - a. Read back through the prompt and make sure you've crossed off everything
  - b. Scan your answer and make sure it says what you wanted it to say

Directive Words: Effective answers to essay questions such as FRQs depend upon a clear understanding of the meanings of directive words. For example, if you describe when you are asked to compare, or list when you are asked to evaluate, your responses will be less than satisfactory. An essay can only begin to be correct if it answers directly the question that is asked. Here are the meanings of several key directive words:

1. Analyze: determine component parts and examine their nature and relationship
2. Assess/Evaluate: judge the value or character of something; evaluate the positive points and the negative ones; discuss the advantages and disadvantages of
3. Compare: examine in order to show similarities
4. Contrast: examine in order to show differences
5. Describe: give an account of; tell about; give a word picture of
6. Discuss: consider or examine from various points of view; debate; present the different sides of
7. Explain: make clear or plain; make clear the causes or reasons for; make known in detail; tell the meaning of