HOW BEST TO RESPOND (& PREPARE FOR !) ESSAY QUESTIONS:

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1. Read each question carefully and be sure to answer all parts.
2. Organize your answer around a **clear focus**. Write a **thesis statement** that is not just a restatement of the problem/question, but also provides a context and indicates the main point of your essay. (Why is it important?)
3. Outline your answer. In the margin or on scratch paper, write down the major points you want to make.
4. Bring the reader quickly to each point. Be thorough, but avoid padding. (For example, a list of facts more often distracts the reader, rather than give the impression that the writer knows what he/she is talking about.)
5. Stick to your subject. Do **not** try to tell everything you know. Essay testing is designed to measure your ability to select, organize and analyze the details you have learned into a coherent set of ideas.
6. Support generalities with specific and relevant evidence. **Provide examples.** Do not merely state what you know, but explain **how** and **why** you know it.
7. Proofread your answers if possible to catch any errors or omissions made in haste.

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