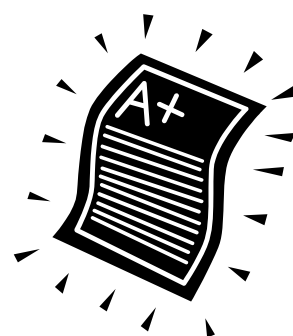


**TIMING**

Work out how long you have to answer each question. If you are required to answer 3 questions from 5 in 2 hours, the time per question is 40 minutes. If you are required to answer 4 questions from 6 in 3 hours, the time per question is 45 minutes. I always recommend, with discussion type questions, that you spend the first 5 minutes of each answer preparing a short answer plan. This is time well spent, and although it reduces the time you have to write your formal answer, it generally leads to a better structured and reasoned answer. It also avoids the temptation to write everything you know about a particular topic without actually answering the question.



Always answer the questions you are more familiar with FIRST, leaving the “hardest” questions to last. All answers are worth the same marks, so try and get as many marks as possible by answering what you feel are the “easiest” ones first. Do not be tempted to run over time with a question you know lots about – all answers are worth equal marks, and *waffle* obtains few marks.

**ANSWER PLAN**

Read the question, read the question again, and then write yourself some bullet points about how you will answer the question. Read the question again, and check that your model answer actually answers the question. This should take no more than 5 minutes.

**START WRITING**

Use your answer plan to construct your answer. You should always write in full sentences, unless the question specifically asks you to “list”. Bullet point answers where an essay is expected, will, at best, receive HALF marks. The marker cannot be expected to guess what you mean if you have not explained your point sufficiently. An exam is your opportunity to demonstrate your level of understanding. If you have run out of time, the aim is obviously to get as much relevant information on the exam script as possible, but hopefully you have managed your time better.

**WHAT IS THE QUESTION ASKING FOR?**

Check carefully the language used in the question, and make sure you do what it asks.

**EXPLAIN**

This is asking for your understanding of a particular situation or topic. A clear and detailed account is expected. Use of examples may get your point across more easily and usually attracts higher marks.

## **DISCUSS**

This is asking you to consider a topic from a number of viewpoints. As the word suggests, a discussion is expected. This implies some use of critical analysis, perhaps considering a point or topic from a number of angles. Again use of examples can be helpful.

## **COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

As the words suggest a discussion of the similarities and differences of two or more entities is expected here. A good approach is to discuss the entities one by one, under clearly labelled headings, rather than provide one long answer which jumps back and forth between entities. Here is where your answer plan is invaluable.

## **EXAMINE**

This requires some demonstration of detailed knowledge. As the word suggest you are expected to inspect or scrutinize in your answer. Again, use of examples may help.

## **OUTLINE**

It is unlikely that an entire question will be based on an outline. The question may ask you to outline a process, and explain some entity further. If this is the case do not spend too much time outlining, leaving too little time to explain sufficiently. An outline requires little detail or analysis.

## **COMMENT**

This is a bit like “discuss”. You are expected to use critique and examples. “Comment” may be used where a number of issues arise, and given the time permitted per question, you will probably not have time to dwell on each point you make. Make sure you do explain your point sufficiently however, and avoid the use of bullet points if possible.

## **ANALYSE**

As the word suggests some analysis is expected. e.g. A good answer would perhaps show two sides of an argument with a justified discussion in support of one side of the argument. Be critical in your analysis, demonstrating your knowledge on the topic.

## **LIST**

This seldom appears, but will allow you to use those bullet points. It is likely that this will form only part of a question, with some form of discussion or analysis requested to follow.

## **READ OVER YOUR ANSWERS**

If time permits read over all your answers at the end to check for spelling and grammatical errors. Try and write legibly. I appreciate that this is difficult, but if your script is truly unreadable the marks you deserve cannot be awarded.