

## Ten Tips for Timed Writing Exams

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- 1. ANSWER THE QUESTION:** DO NOT write upon a topic other than the one specified in the prompt. The number one reason students do not pass the WPE is they do not adequately answer the question.
- 2. KEEP TRACK OF TIME:**– Time management is very important. 75 minutes seems very short in a timed situation; practice writing for 75 minutes so that you know how much time is available for each section of the essay. A general time distribution is 10-15 minutes to brainstorm and cluster ideas, 45 to 50 minutes to write, and 5-10 minutes to proofread.
- 3. TAKE TIME TO ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS:** Analysis usually takes place during the organization stage. Take the time to organize your ideas and select your examples. Write your thesis. This is your blueprint for the essay. You will not have time to change your mind halfway through! Take the time in the beginning, and use this blueprint to stay focused and on track.
- 4. SUPPORT YOUR THESIS WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:** Each paragraph should develop one topic with specific examples that support your thesis. Do not forget to include topic sentences for each paragraph. Providing clear concrete examples is a requirement for passing the WPE
- 5. AVOID HARMFUL GRAMMAR ERRORS:** Not all errors are equal! Grammatical errors that hinder meaning will lower your score. Particularly important are verb errors. Incorrect verb tenses hinders meaning. An essay that is not understood will not pass.
- 6. AVOID EXCESSIVE TIME SPENT ON INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION:** The introduction should include your thesis. The conclusion should have some sense of ending; don't just stop in mid-sentence. However, the majority of time should be spent developing the body of the essay.
- 7. WRITE NEATLY:** While you will not be penalized for sloppy handwriting, it will make your essay more difficult to read and understand. If the WPE readers are struggling with your ideas, your score could be lowered. It is a good idea to practice your handwriting. When in doubt, print.
- 8. WRITE IN PEN:** Ink is easier for the WPE readers to read. As the readers read each essay very quickly, you want your essay to be as accessible as possible. If you must use pencil, you should use a dark #2 lead pencil.
- 9. USE TRANSITION WORDS:** transition words connect your ideas together. Pick a few words that you are completely familiar with, and use those in your essay. Make sure, however, that you are using the words correctly.
- 10. LEAVE TIME TO PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY:** Often important errors can be caught in with a quick proofread. Make sure your examples are specific. Check your verb tenses. Do you have proper punctuation? This 5-10 minutes could be the difference between a 3 or a 4 score.