

Patterns to Look for and Questions to Ask When Evaluating Fact-Pattern-Essay Practice Question or Exam Results

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- For disappointing results on fact-pattern-essay practice questions or exams, you want to consider a variety of possible errors.
- Some of the questions you want to ask AND make notes as to what you find out are:
 - Did you misread the instructions for the exam?
 - Did you use the special format (example: IRAC) or word/page limits required by your professor?
 - Did you answer the specific question(s) asked in the call of the question after each fact pattern?
 - Did you spot all of the main issues?
 - Did you spot all of the sub-issues?
 - Did you write about issues or sub-issues that were not actually in the question?
 - Did you outline/chart your answer thoroughly before you started writing?
 - Did you state rules or exceptions to rules precisely?
 - If multiple rules applied to an issue, did you discuss each rule?
 - Did you thoroughly analyze each issue or sub-issue?
 - Did you indicate the issue in the format desired by your professor?
 - Did you discuss arguments for both parties?
 - Did you fully explain each point that you made (the conclusion plus the why)?
 - Did you include all of the facts needed to support your arguments?
 - Did you avoid assumptions regarding the facts?
 - Did you avoid deleting, changing, or adding facts?
 - Did you cite appropriate cases that had similar or different results?
 - Did you organize your answer in a logical way that was easy for the professor to follow?
 - Did you understand the material to the depth that you needed to know to do well?
 - Had you studied the topic or sub-topic or did you assume it would not be on the exam?

- Did you write about so much detail that you missed the “big picture” of the question?
- Did you avoid verbose, convoluted, and flowery writing?
- Did you avoid unnecessary introductions?
- Did you avoid repetition?
- Did you avoid writing about information that was unrelated to the issues?
- Was your handwriting legible? Was your typing accurate?
- Did you run out of time because you did not use a strict time chart technique?
- Did you finish way ahead of your classmates?
- Did you practice enough questions throughout the semester to hone your skills and prepare for a variety of scenarios?
- Did you know the “black letter law” but not how to apply it?
- Were there other errors?

Revised 6/2013