

# QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

## PACING GUIDE FOR WRITING THE ESSAY

<b>5 minutes</b>	Step 1 Read the question carefully. Step 2 Restate to yourself what the question is asking. Underline the key words. Step 3 Make a list by brainstorming all the ideas that come to mind. Write down your ideas. Step 4 Create a thesis from the ideas you have brainstormed. Step 5 Turn your brainstorm into an informal working plan by numbering the items that you want include in your essay in the order in which you want to include them. Cross out ideas that no longer fit now that you have a thesis statement.
<b>4 minutes</b>	Step 6 Begin writing your introduction by stating your thesis clearly. Step 7 Read your first paragraph to be sure that your ideas follow each other logically and support your thesis.
<b>10 minutes</b>	Step 8 Check your quick list of ideas. Choose the next idea and write a transition into your second paragraph. Keep writing until you use all the RELEVANT ideas on your quick list.
<b>4 minutes</b>	Step 9 Write a solid conclusion using one of the following techniques: (a) rephrasing your thesis, (b) summarizing your main points, (c) referring in some way back to your introductory paragraph.
<b>2 minutes</b>	Step 10 Proofread and revise neatly.

## TOP 10 RULES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

- Rule 1:** Use Action Verbs and the Active Voice
- Rule 2:** Use Precise Words
- Rule 3:** Say What You Mean
- Rule 4:** Maintain Your Tone
- Rule 5:** Use Direct Language
- Rule 6:** Use Concise Language
- Rule 7:** Improve Sentences
- Rule 8:** Develop Sentence Variety
- Rule 9:** Use Standard Rules of English for Capitalization
- Rule 10:** Use Standard Rules of English for Punctuation

## STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Carefully read the entire sentence, NOT just the underlined phrases. The underlined words may seem correct unless you read the whole statement.
- As you read, listen for any words or phrases that do not “sound” right to you. Anything that sounds awkward or strange may be a mistake.
- Always substitute into the sentence the choices for the part that you think is incorrect.
- Do not spend time to read choice (A), because it repeats the original sentence.
- Find the best answer, not one that is simply correct. More than one choice may be correct, but only one best fits the context.
- If the sentence sounds correct to your ear, the correct choice is probably (A).
- Answer the easy questions first.  
**NOTE:** Be sure to skip the answer ovals for the questions you skip.
- Look for errors according to difficulty:
  1. Capitalization and punctuation errors
  2. Grammar and syntax errors
  3. Usage, sequence of tenses, parallel structure, redundancy, and then other errors
- Read a sentence or passage through twice before making any decision about an answer.
- Identify the subject and the predicate of each sentence to help you find errors in usage, redundancy, and relevance.