

Review Sheet for Essay Writing

I. Review sheet distributed before each essay test to help students prepare for possible questions and to remind them of expectations for writing:

Essay Question: You will be asked to write about a theme in Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* or in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Review your notes and the readings to prepare for possible topics. For example, in discussing Blake, we considered, his emphasis on nature and the imagination, his idealization of childhood, and his critique of social institutions. For *Frankenstein*, we talked about the idea of the overreacher, the concept of the "natural man," and Shelley's treatment of nature as a source of solace and renewal.

Guidelines for Writing the Essay. The score you earn on the essay depends on the quality of your ideas and the effectiveness of your writing. A competent essay has the following characteristics:

1. *A main point.* In a brief opening paragraph, you should name the author and title of the work under discussion, introduce the topic, and state your main idea-the thesis you plan to develop in the rest of the essay.
2. *A clear, easy-to-follow organization.* You should divide the essay into paragraphs, each of which develops a POINT or focuses on a particular aspect of the topic.
3. *Relevant, well-chosen illustrations.* In developing each body paragraph, you should give specific ILLUSTRATIONS from the work and EXPLAIN how those illustrations support your point.
4. *Effective writing.* Your writing should be clear and correct. The reader should not have to struggle to grasp your meaning. Sentences, word choice, and punctuation should follow the standards of good English.

The sample essay included in the syllabus illustrates these four features. Please review it carefully. Also, a grading rubric is included in the syllabus.