

## Answer the Essay & Short Answer Exam Question Well

### Part 1: Define and Definition of Questions

#### FACULTY PROMPTS & PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

Most essay questions contain an action word that you can use to help you organize your response to that question. In general, there are six of these Action Words:

**Define / Definition of**

Analyze / Analysis of

Cause & Effect

Compare / Contrast

Process Analysis/Describe/List

Supported Opinion (Defend/Refute)

#### 1. DEFINE / DEFINITION OF QUESTIONS

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL SAMPLE ANSWERS ARE SHORT – YOU SHOULD ALWAYS GIVE MORE DETAIL IN YOUR ANSWERS!**

**Answering definition questions:**

1. State the term.
2. State the class or group to which the term belongs, if appropriate.
3. Differentiate the term from other members of the class, if appropriate.

**Strategies to use in answering definition questions:**

1. Give details which describe the term
2. Provide examples and/or historical incidents which illustrate this term.
3. Give comparisons to familiar terms.
4. Classification (i.e., break it down into parts)
5. Provide an illustration of origins or causes

**Illustrations of definition answers:**

 **Typical define or definition questions would look like these:**

1. Define acid precipitation.

2. Choose 2 terms from the following list and define them: Elements, Compounds, Chemical Bonds, Polarity, Solution
3. Define a citation-sequence format in the Council of Science Editors (CSE) style.
4. What is Kinesthesia?

↪ **Answers to these questions could look like these:**

1. Acid precipitation is rain, snow or fog with a pH lower than the pH of un-contaminated rain (5.6).
2. - Elements cannot be broken down to other substances by ordinary chemical means.  
- A solution is a liquid consisting of a uniform mixture of two or more substances.
3. The citation-sequence format is one of three in-text CSE formats. It uses a superscript number or a number in parentheses after any mention of a source. The sources are numbered in the order they appear and each number refers to the same source every time it is used.
4. Kinesthesia is the sense that tells you where the parts of your body are with respect to each other.

↪ **Avoid answers that look like these:**

1. Acid rain damages lakes and trees, and kills fish. *(This answer assumes that acid rain is the same as acid precipitation and what it does, not what it is. This information added to the answer above would be OK.)*
2. - There are 92 elements. *(This tells you how many elements exist not what an element is.)*  
- A solution has both solvents and solutes. *(This tells you the sub-parts of the term without the definition.)*
3. The citation-sequence format is one of 3 formats used for in-text citations. *(While this tells you how many formats there are in CSE, it does not define the citation-sequence format. This answer does not differentiate the citation-sequence format from the other three in the group.)*
4. Kinesthesia helps guide eye-hand coordination. *(This answer gives an example of kinesthesia not the definition.)*