
How to Write a Bar Essay That Passes

The grader spends 30 seconds to 90 seconds reading your essay. Everything below is designed around that fact.

Organize for a Speed Reader

Use clear IRAC headers for every issue. The grader is not reading your essay carefully. They are scanning it. Headers tell them where to look. If your essay looks organized at a glance, you have already cleared a major hurdle.

Your analysis section should be visibly longer than the other parts. When a grader scans the page, the shape of your essay matters. A thick analysis paragraph under each issue signals that you did the work.

Rule Statements: Don't Panic

There are too many rules tested on the bar to memorize them all perfectly. When you don't remember the exact rule, don't freeze. **Reverse engineer the rule from the facts.** The facts in the prompt are telling you what the rule is about. Write a rule statement that sounds mostly right. As long as you spotted the right issue, a reasonable-sounding rule keeps you in the game.

The grader is not checking your rule statement against a textbook. They are checking whether you identified the issue and applied law to facts.

Analysis: Use a Formula

Tie specific facts to specific elements. Every sentence in your analysis should connect a fact from the prompt to an element of the rule. Use this pattern:

[Element] was satisfied because [specific fact from the prompt].

Or: *Due to [specific fact], [element] was satisfied.*

This formula forces you to do real analysis instead of restating the rule. Even if your legal reasoning is not perfectly accurate, the structure makes you look like someone who can apply law to facts. That is what the grader is looking for.

Conclusions: Add One More Fact

Don't write a bare conclusion. Instead of ending with just the outcome, append it with the key facts that support it.

Instead of: "Therefore, diversity jurisdiction was satisfied."

Write: "Diversity jurisdiction was satisfied because Joe was domiciled in State Y, Sally was domiciled in State B, and the amount in controversy was \$80,000."

That version takes five extra seconds to write and makes your conclusion look like analysis. **The more analysis the grader sees, the better your essay looks.**

The Bottom Line

The goal is not a law review article. The goal is an essay that *looks right* to someone reading it in under 90 seconds. Clear headers, reasonable rules, facts tied to elements, and conclusions that echo the analysis. Do that consistently across every issue and your essay will read like a passing answer.

