

## SUGGESTIONS ON WRITING THE ESSAY EXAMINATION

1. **Think before you write.** Read each question carefully, think through the facts, and their necessary implications. Outline the issues or problems; reach your conclusions; analyze your conclusions from the standpoints both of the law and of common-sense; revise them if necessary. Then decide on a logical, orderly, and convincing arrangement for the statement of your views. You are not ready to write until you have done all that.
2. **Do not restate the facts.** The examiners know what the facts are and you have no time to waste.
3. **Do not state abstract or irrelevant propositions of law.** It is usually undesirable to begin an answer with a legal proposition. If the proposition is applicable it will be more appropriate later in the answer, in order to indicate the reason for your conclusion. If it is not applicable, it cannot help you to state it. Although it is seldom necessary to state any applicable rule of law in full detail, make a sufficiently detailed reference to it in your answer so that the examiner will not be in doubt as to your knowledge of it and of the conditions which make its application proper. Do not, by speculating on what the case would have been if the facts had been different, nor in any other way, work into your answer some point of law with which you happen to be familiar, but which is not called for by the question. The examiners are not interested in knowing how many rules of law you have learned, but rather, the way in which you apply the applicable rules to the facts stated.
4. **Discuss as many problems that you can identify.** A grasp of all the issues is essential. For example, if you identify three issues, do not waste time on discussing only one.
5. **Express yourself clearly, as a lawyer should.** WRITE AS LEGIBLY AS POSSIBLE. Avoid ambiguous, meaningless, and rambling statements; verbosity, and long, involved sentences; undue repetition; and flippancy, slang and colloquialism.
6. **The purpose of the bar examination is to test your ability to think and express yourself as a lawyer.** The bar exam is designed to test your ability to apply what you have already learned to the facts of the problems such as those which might arise in your practice. The value of an answer depends not only upon your conclusions, but even more upon the evidence it displays of the elements mentioned above.

Geoffrey R. Bok, Chairman