

Guideline for writing a school exam

Human Geography, UiO

A well-written school exam shows that you have relevant knowledge and can argue logically. Your discussion should be analytical and link different parts of the curricula.

Remember to *start* your paper with an identification of the question that you choose to answer. You do not have to write the text of the question, the number is sufficient.

Start your answer with a short *introduction* telling what you will write about. You may also include a comment on what you are *not* going to discuss. It is important that you limit your answer since the time available to you is short. Keep to the core of the issue of the given question.

You should only define the *key concepts*. It is not necessary to define common concepts that are not at the very core of your answer. There is for instance no need to define “global south” or “development” when those words are not important issues in your answer. If you discuss different concepts regarding the same issue, you must conclude which one you will be using in the paper and why. It would in this case be positive for your grade if you at the end of the answer can point at the implication your choice of concept may have for your conclusion.

It is imperative that you *only answer* the question given! The grade you get is *not* favourably influenced by interesting information that you are well versed in but that is *not* relevant to the question (or only peripherally so). In fact, your grade may be negatively affected if you write extensively about issues that the reader finds to be remote from the given question.

You must not write a very short answer. The point is to show *knowledge and understanding* of the complexities of the issues asked about. The grading system that we use, makes your grade somewhat influenced by the answers given by all the students at the course you take. If most of them write quite extensively, a short answer from you, although well-written and relevant, may obtain a lesser grade.

It may make sense to write about *theory* even when it is not included explicitly in the question given. Furthermore, it is positive for the grade to include either in the main text or at the end more general theoretical, philosophical and/or empirical reflections.

You should avoid writing *naively*. Do not for instance include general viewpoints of how the world can become a better place. Think also about whether your text consists of many words with little meaningful content. It may be sensible in some places of your text to write why you find it relevant to include the information or points you do.

Do not write with rapid changes in sub-issues inside a paragraph. Your *language* should be simple but not orally. It is important that the information you provide is precise.

Repetitions, especially of numbers and amounts, should normally not be made. If you find it important to mention the same information again, remember then to write e.g. “as mentioned above”.

It is not necessary to use *references* to authors in your answer. However, it is positive for your grade to link arguments and viewpoints to important authors. To state your own opinions and give critical remarks to debates strengthens your paper. You may include this in the main text or at the end of your paper. All answers shall have a short summary containing what in your opinion the main points regarding the question given are.

Historical information is relevant to include if and only if it has a bearing on today’s reality. You must make this relevance explicitly clear to the reader.

It is imperative to write in a manner that is *easily readable*! Your handwriting must be simple and clear, not fancy and neither very small nor very large.

When the questions given consist of two different questions that both shall be answered (or three questions from which you shall select two), *both* answers must have an acceptable quality. If you fail on one of the two questions, you *fail* the exam.