

FRQ writing tips from someone who has to read all those essays...

(I've read AP Psych FRQs for 8 years. Please, listen to this advice.)

To score the most possible points on an FRQ, follow these simple guidelines:

1. Use the acronym S.O.D.A.S. Remember that S.O.D.A.S. means **S**pace out your answer with a line in between ideas, keep the **O**rders of the prompt, **D**efine everything (even if it doesn't say so in the prompt), **A**pply everything to the prompt, and use **S**ynonyms in your answer to avoid parroting the prompt. (This analogy coined by N. Fenton and J. Flitter, AP Psych teachers-extraordinaire.)
2. Write legibly, even on practice FRQs. If your reader can't decipher your writing, you won't score. Pen? Pencil? No one cares.
3. DO. NOT. WRITE. AN. ESSAY. Essays are for English class. FRQs are free responses to prompts - totally different. Do not write a conclusion or a summary. Especially one that ends, "In conclusion..."
4. You must write in complete sentences, but you are allowed to put a bullet point to denote a new sentence/thought is occurring.
5. Avoid writing a big blobby paragraph. S P A C E O U T Y O U R A N S W E R
6. Anticipate the number of points the rubric will have. You should be able to do this from the directions in the prompt. (If it asks for comparisons, it is likely two points. Positive and negative? Two points? Help vs. hinder? Likely two points.)
7. Read the prompt. Then reread it to ensure you understand what it is asking. Then, answer the prompt. After you're done - go back to ensure you've answered the prompt. Many times people do not score simply because they do not address the prompt.
8. Definitions alone do not score. Make sure you are applying the terms to the prompt.
9. You score points, you don't "lose points" - the more key ideas, terms, and people you include in your answer, the more likely you are to hit on the term or idea you reader is looking for. Be careful though, a reader can not score your answer if it is directly contradictory. Also, beware of shotgunning, or tossing out every possible answer to a prompt. This technique is unlikely to score you any points.
10. Assume your reader knows nothing about psychology. Spell everything out for them. Be clear when you do so.
11. Finally - **ANSWER THE PROMPT.**