GREEK CIVILIZATION

1400-1100 B.C.  
End of Minoan civilization of Crete [c. 1400 B.C.]

Period of Emergence  
Trojan War [c. 1200 B.C.]
Dorian invasion [c. 1200 B.C.]
End of Mycenaean civilization [c. 1100 B.C.]

1100-800 B.C.  
Homer composed the Iliad and the Odyssey; Hesiod composed the Theogony

Dark Age  
Foundations of Greek civilization were being established

800-500 B.C.  
First Olympic Games held [776 B.C.]
city states flourished [Miletus, Sparta, Athens, etc.] [c. 700-500 B.C.]
rational thought, medicine, science: Thales, Hippocrates, Pythagoras
art, poetry, literature: Sappho in Lesbos
Spartan military dictatorship and Athenian democracy evolved
Solon reformed Athenian democracy [594-593 B.C.]

500-300 B.C.  
Persian invasion repulsed [490-480 B.C.]

Classical Age or Age of Pericles  
Pericles reformed Athenian democracy

Classical art, architecture; philosophy: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
historians and playwrights: Thucydides, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, etc.
Peloponnesian War [431-404 B.C.]

400-300 B.C.  
Philip, Alexander the Great and his conquests [336-323 B.C.]

Hellenistic Era  
Alexandria, Hellenistic science: Euclid, Hipparchus, Aristarchus, Galen, etc.
Ptolemaic Egypt [323-30 B.C.]
Cleopatra [69-30 B.C.]

ROMAN CIVILIZATION

800 B.C.  
Founding of Rome

700-500 B.C.  
Etruscans dominated Rome

509-264 B.C.  
Etruscans and their last king, Tarquin the Proud, expelled [509 B.C.]

Early Republic  
Roman Republic established

patricians and plebeians; Senate, magistrates, consuls, pro-consuls, peoples' tribunes
Rome established control over Italian peninsula; granted two types of citizenship

265-27 B.C.  
Punic Wars [264-146 B.C.]

Late Republic  
Rome conquered Carthage, Greece, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, Spain, Gaul [146-73 B.C.]
latifundia estates; slavery; slave rebellions
civil wars and political turmoil in Rome [c. 133-31 B.C.]
political reforms of Gracchus Brothers [Tiberius and Gaius]
Triumvirates: Cicero, Pompey, Julius Caesar
Julius Caesar ended Republic [49 B.C.] and was assassinated [44 B.C.]

27 B.C.-284 A.D.  
Early Empire [also Pax Romana]
Octavian [Caesar Augustus] began empire [27 B.C.]

Early Empire [also Pax Romana]  
birth of Jesus Christ [c. 4 B.C.]
era of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero [14-68 A.D.]
great fire in Rome and persecution of Christians [64 A.D.]
Roman destruction of Jerusalem [70 A.D.]
era of Nerva, Trajan Hadrian, Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius [96-180 A.D.]
citizenship extended to new frontiers, religious crisis, political decay

284-406 A.D.  
Late Empire  
Emperor Diocletian revived imperial system [284-305 A.D.]
Emperor Constantine built Constantinople, converted to Christianity [312-317 A.D.]
Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the state religion [379-395 A.D.]
invasion of the Roman world by nomad/barbarians began [406 A.D.]
13:73 the thumos inside my inward breast drives me all the harder to carry on the war and the fighting.

2:45 (Athena) kindled the strength in each man's kradle to take the battle without respite and keep on fighting.

7:120 The hero spoke like this and bent the phrenes of his brother...

19:307 I beg of you, if any dear companion will listen to me, stop urging me to satisfy the etor in me with food, since this sorrow has come upon me.

22:296 And Hektor knew the truth in his phrenes,...

18:344 (Odyssey) ...but the ker within him was pondering other thoughts.

21:389 Zeus heard it from... Olympos and was amused in his etor...

(from the Lattimore translations; all translations are from this source unless hereafter noted by an * (asterisk) which will indicate my translation. In the Lattimore quotations I have interpolated the Greek when appropriate.)

These "centers" of the Homeric person are spoken about as though they were separate entities and indeed they were. The gods acted through the centers in order to communicate with Homeric man. Dodds refers to this process as "psychic intervention,"

"...objectifying emotional drives," treating them as not-self, must have opened the door wide to the religious idea of psychic intervention, which is often said to operate, not directly on man himself, but on his thumos....
his bad thoughts and no longer remembers his troubles: the gifts of these goddesses instantly divert the mind.

Daughters of Zeus, I greet you; add passion to my song, and tell of the sacred race of gods who are forever, descended from Earth and starry Sky, from dark Night, and from salty sea. Tell how in the beginning the gods and the earth came into being, as well as the rivers, the limitless sea with its raging surges, the shining stars, and the broad sky above—a also how they divided the estate and distributed privileges among themselves, and how they first established themselves in the folds of Mount Olympus. Relate these things to me, Muses whose home is Olympus, from the beginning; tell me which of them first came into being.

First of all, the Void came into being, next broad-bosomed Earth, the solid and eternal home of all, and Eros [Desire], the most beautiful of the immortal gods, who in every man and every god softens the sinews and overpowers the prudent purpose of the mind. Out of Void came Darkness and black Night, and out of Night came Light and Day, her children conceived after union in love with Darkness. Earth first produced starry Sky, equal in size with herself, to cover her on all sides. Next she produced the tall mountains, the pleasant haunts of the gods, and also gave birth to the barren waters, sea with its raging surges—all this without the passion of love. Thereafter she lay with Sky and gave birth to Ocean with its

deep current, Coeus and Crius and Hyperion and Iapetus; Thea and Rhea and Themis [Law] and Mnemosyne [Memory]; also golden-crowned Phoebe and lovely Tethys. After these came cunning Cronus, the youngest and boldest of her children; and he grew to hate the father who had begotten him.

Earth also gave birth to the violent Cyclopes—Thunderer, Lightner, and bold Flash—who made and gave to Zeus the thunder and the lightning-bolt. They were like the gods in all respects except that a single eye stood in the middle of their foreheads, and their strength and power and skill were in their hands.

There were also born to Earth and Sky three more children, big, strong, and horrible, Cottus and Briareus and Gyges. This unruly brood had a hundred monstrous hands sprouting from their shoulders, and fifty heads on top of their shoulders growing from their sturdy bodies. They had monstrous strength to match their huge size.

Of all the children born of Earth and Sky these were the boldest, and their father hated them from the beginning. As each of them was about to be born, Sky would not let them reach the light of day; instead he hid them all away in the bowels of Mother Earth. Sky took pleasure in doing this evil thing. In spite of her enormous size, Earth felt the strain within her and groaned. Finally she thought of an evil and cunning stratagem. She instantly produced a new metal, gray steel, and made a huge sickle. Then she laid the matter before her children; the anguish in her heart made her speak boldly: "My children, you have a savage father; if you will listen to me, we may be able to take vengeance for his evil outrage: he was the one who started using violence."

This was what she said; but all the children were gripped

19 Omitting lines 144-45, which are an interpolation expanding line 145: "and they were named Cyclopes because they had a single round eye set in their foreheads."
by fear, and not one of them spoke a word. Then great Cronus, the cunning trickster, took courage and answered his good mother with these words: “Mother, I am willing to undertake and carry through your plan. I have no respect for our infamous father, since he was the one who started using violence.”

This was what he said, and enormous Earth was very pleased. She hid him in ambush and put in his hands the sickle with jagged teeth, and instructed him fully in her plot. Huge Sky came drawing night behind him and desiring to make love; he lay on top of Earth stretched all over her. Then from his ambush his son reached out with his left hand and with his right took the huge sickle with its long jagged teeth and quickly sheared the organs from his own father and threw them away, backward over his shoulder. But that was not the end of them. The drops of blood that spurted from them were all taken in by Mother Earth, and in the course of the revolving years she gave birth to the powerful Erinyes [Spirits of Vengeance] and the huge Giants with shining armor and long spears. As for the organs themselves, for a long time they drifted round the sea just as they were when Cronus cut them off with the steel edge and threw them from the land into the waves of the ocean; then white foam issued from the divine flesh, and in the foam a girl began to grow. First she came near to holy Cythera, then reached Cyprus, the land surrounded by sea. There she stepped out, a goddess, tender and beautiful, and round her slender feet the green grass shot up.

She is called Aphrodite by gods and men, because she grew in the foam, and also Cythera, because she came near to Cythera, and the Cyprian, because she was born in watery Cyprus. Eros [Desire] and beautiful Passion were her attendants both at her birth and at her first going to join the family of the gods. The rights and privileges assigned to her from the beginning and recognized by men and gods are these: to preside over the whispers and smiles and tricks which girls employ, and the sweet delight and tenderness of love.

Great Father Sky called his children the Titans, because of his feud with them: he said that they blindly had tightened the noose and had done a savage thing for which they would have to pay in time to come.

Night gave birth to hateful Destruction and the black Specter and Death; she also bore Sleep and the race of Dreams—all these the dark goddess Night bore without sleeping with any male. Next she gave birth to Blame and painful Grief, and also the Fates and the pitiless Specters of Vengeance; it is these goddesses who keep account of the transgressions of men and of gods, and they never let their terrible anger end till they have brought punishment down on the head of the transgressor. Deadly Night also bore Retribution to plague men, then Deceit and Love and Accursed Old Age and stubborn Strife.

Hateful Strife gave birth to painful Distress and Distraction and Famine and tearful Sorrow; also Wars and Battles and Murders and Slaughters; also Feuds and Lying Words and Angry Words; also Lawlessness and Madness—two sisters that go together—and the Oath, which, sworn with willful falsehood, brings utter destruction on men.

Sea produced Nereus, who never lies and is always true. He was his eldest child, and is called the Old Man of the Sea.
Herakleitos "the Obscure" - *floruit* 500 B.C.

Selected Fragments

17. The majority of people do not notice the things they meet with, nor do they know them when they have learned about them, but they merely imagine they do so.

123. The true nature of things loves to hide itself.

45. You could not find the boundaries of the soul, whatever paths you go down; such is the depth of its being (*logos*).

Fire, Flux and Strife

30. This cosmos (*world-order*), the same for all, no one of gods or men has made, but it always was and is and shall be: an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.

84. In changing it is at rest.

12. Upon those who are stepping into the same rivers different and again different waters flow.

80. One must know that war is common, and strife is justice, and all things come to pass by strife and necessity.

110. It is not better for people to get all they want.

Interdependence of Opposites

50. Having heard not me but the *Logos*, it is wise to agree that all things are one.

10. Connexions: things whole and not whole, something brought together and brought apart, something in tune and out of tune: from all things a unity; and from unity all things.

51. People do not understand how what is being brought apart comes together with itself: there is a "back-stretched connexion" as with the bow or the lyre.

48. The name of the bow (bios) is life, but its work is death.

103. In a circle beginning and end are common.

60. The way up, the way down: one and the same.

67. God is: day and night, winter and summer; war and peace, satiety and hunger.

102. To God all things are beautiful and just, but men have supposed some things just and some unjust.
Opposites and Perspectives

111. It is disease that makes health pleasant and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.

58. Doctors, who cut and burn, complain that they receive no worthy fee; but they produce the same effect as the disease!

61. The sea is the most pure and the most polluted water: for fishes it is drinkable and salutary, but for people it is undrinkable and deadly.

13. Figs delight in mud rather than in clean water.


Life and Death

62. Immortals are mortals, mortals are immortals; for the former live the death of the latter, and would die their life.

88. As one and the same thing there exists in us living and dead, the waking and the sleeping, young and old: for these things having changed round are those, and those things having changed round are these.

26. Man in the night kindles a light for himself, though his vision is extinguished; though alive, he touches the dead, while sleeping; though awake, he touches the sleeper.

21. What we see when awake is death, and what we see when asleep is life.

27. When people die there awaits them what they neither expect nor even imagine.

64. A bolt of lightning steers all things.

41. To be wise is one thing; to know the intelligence by which all things are steered through all ways.

1. Of this Logos, real as it is, people always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and even after they have heard it; for, although all things come to pass in accordance with this Logos, people behave as if inexperienced each time they experience either speech or deeds -- whereas I, for my part, explain such words and things taking apart each of them according to its true nature and then showing how it is; as for the rest of the people they remain unaware of what they do after they wake up, just as they forget what they do while asleep.
paramenides. this poem is the result of my own interpretation of the passages.

the poem begins with the description of the setting:

...what the god said to me...
### Plato's Tripartite Soul

**Book IV, 439d-e & 441 (page 239 & 241)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes of Society</th>
<th>Objects Pursued</th>
<th>Parts of Soul</th>
<th>Parts of Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophers</td>
<td>wisdom</td>
<td>rational-reflective</td>
<td>head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(logistikon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>power, honour, fame</td>
<td>spirited</td>
<td>chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(thumoeides)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>pleasure (money)</td>
<td>appetitive</td>
<td>lower abdomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(epithumetikon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levels:

1. Around 385 B.C. Plato writes the dialogue in which he says that
2. 15 years earlier Apollodorus was talking to a friend and said that
3. 2 days before he (Apollodorus) had been telling Glauncon that
4. Aristodemus had told him (Apollodorus) that
5. around 416 B.C. a drinking party at which Sokrates, in a main speech, recounted a conversation he had had sometime previously with a priestess Diotima--that carries the central message of the dialogue
The divided line

Theory of Forms

Philosophy has a special name for such concepts: forms or ideas.
The knowledge we have is the result of the process of learning and the way we've learned it. And now, how is it that the process of learning and the way we've learned it?
The divided line

The Divided Line

In the discussion of the divinity of Plato, there are many references to the concept of the divided line and its implications for the understanding of the divine. The divided line is a metaphor for the separation between the world of the visible and the world of the intelligible. Plato uses this concept to explain the nature of reality and the search for knowledge.

The divided line consists of two parts: the divided soul and the divided world. The divided soul is divided into two parts: knowledge and ignorance. The divided world is divided into two parts: the world of the visible and the world of the intelligible.

The divided soul represents the human condition. The divided world represents the nature of reality. The divided line, therefore, represents the relationship between the human condition and the nature of reality.

Plato argues that the divided soul has the potential to be divided into two parts: knowledge and ignorance. The divided soul is divided into two parts: the soul of the knower and the soul of the ignorer. The divided world is divided into two parts: the world of the visible and the world of the intelligible.

The divided line, therefore, represents the relationship between the human condition and the nature of reality. The divided line is a metaphor for the separation between the world of the visible and the world of the intelligible. The divided line is a representation of the search for knowledge and the understanding of the divine.

Reason

Reason is the knowledge of the things which are the objects of knowledge. Reason is the knowledge of the things which are the objects of knowledge.

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Reason is the knowledge of the things which are the objects of knowledge. Reason is the knowledge of the things which are the objects of knowledge.
The power of love to Plato's idea of the Good. When the soul's most noble attributes are united, the Idea of the Good is the supreme principle of all things beautiful and right. Plato has given expression to this vision of an absolute, eternal beauty in his dialogues.

"The Good is the highest and truest thing in the world, and the source of truth and reason in the things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the Lord of Reality, Truth, and Value. For two thousand years, when..."
BEAUTY

The Form of Beauty

The Concept of Beauty

Individual Beautiful Entities

Imitations of Beautiful Entities (paintings, photos, reflections, shadows)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE AXIAL PERIOD</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown authors of the Vedas</td>
<td>before 1000 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>1250 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown authors of the Upanishads</td>
<td>800–600 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hebrew Prophets</td>
<td>800–400 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucius</td>
<td>551–479 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoroaster</td>
<td>c. 660 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Tze</td>
<td>c. 604–517 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahavira</td>
<td>599–527 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gautama Buddha</td>
<td>560–480 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
<td>470–399 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>428–348 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>4 B.C.–29 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mani</td>
<td>216–277 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed</td>
<td>570–632 A.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study questions for the Greek phase of Philosophy 100

1. What are the major differences between the Greek "pre-philosophical" world view (shared by many other cultures in their beginnings) and our modern perspective on the world?

2. What important ideas from Heracleitus are incorporeted in Socrates/Plato's philosophy, and how are they used?

3. What ideas from the Pythagorean tradition impressed Plato, and were adopted by him?

4. What are the two phases of the Socratic method? What are the primary features and aims of each phase, and how might these be confused with the practices of the Sophists?

5. Explain what Socrates means when he says (in the Phaedo) that to live the philosophical life is to practise dying and to prepare for death.

6. Characterize Plato's distinction between the sensible realm and the intelligible realm and the relationship between them.

7. How is Plato's theory of Ideas related to the theory of recollection (reminiscence)?

8. Characterize briefly the four kinds of divine madness praised by Socrates in the Phaedrus (244-5, 265).

9. What are the three ways of achieving immortality described in the Symposium, and with what parts of the soul are they related?

10. Describe the stages in the soul's ascent towards absolute beauty in the Symposium.

Philosophical vocabulary (You will be asked to give brief definitions of several of these)

spirit maieutic participation vs observation monothelism vs polytheism

matter aporetic dualism vs monism idealism vs materialism

mana apology absolutism vs relativism immanence vs transcendence

(universe as) organism vs mechanism causal vs teleological (explanation)

...
TAKE HOME ESSAYS

All essays must be double-spaced, word-processed, and free from grammatical and spelling errors.

Make sure you copy your selected question in its entirety at the top of your first page. Your answers should be specific, detailed, developed, and clearly written. Give examples and reasons to support your answers. Refer to and cite the texts. Organization and clarity of expression are essential for getting full credit.

Group 1 – Answer one question only.

1. Discuss in detail how Homer and Hesiod are representative of the Primitive World View with respect to the essential characteristics of the worldview and why Thales represents a departure from this worldview. Why should we take Thales' statement “The nature of things is water” seriously with respect to the characteristics of the Primitive Worldview? Discuss in detail how Thales represents a departure from the Primitive Worldview and how he still remains influenced by it.

2. Explain this fragment of Herakleitos in light of his general philosophy: “This world-order [cosmos] did none of the gods or men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an everliving fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.” Relate this fragment to other fragments discussed in class, especially “god is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, sainy and hunger.”

Group 2 – Answer any question.

1. Discuss in detail the influence of the philosophy of Herakleitos and Parmenides on Plato’s philosophy. In your discussion, pay special attention to Plato’s Theory of Forms and the nature of the soul. Incorporate the influence of Pythagoras’s philosophy into your discussion. Make sure you direct your reader to the relevant passages in the texts in support of your thesis.

2. What is the significance of Parmenides’ mode of expression in the “Prologue” to the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion? Make sure your answer to this question is placed within the context of Parmenides’ epistemology and metaphysics. Next, connect the imagery of Parmenides’s poem with Plato’s “ Allegory of the Cave.” Conclude your discussion by relating in detail the imagery in both works to Plato’s Theory of Forms.

3. Discuss in detail Plato’s conception of the soul. In your discussion, show how the soul develops from the Homeric notion through the Presocratic sense to Plato’s conception. How is Plato’s conception different from his predecessors? In what curious way does it retain some semblance of the Homeric notion?

Group 3 – Answer one question only.

1. Discuss how Sokrates’ teleological inquiry relates and has significance to the discussion of “soul” and how this type of inquiry leads Sokrates and Plato to oppose the teachings of the sophists so much. Include in your discussion what Sokrates means by “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Make sure you place this famous quote into the wider Socratic/Platonic context and conclude why you think this quote is so historically significant.

2. Discuss how anamnesis is related to the Socratic Method why it is so philosophically crucial to Plato’s Theory of Forms. Relate your discussion to the soul’s ascent in the Symposium. Pay special attention to Plato’s Theory of Forms and his philosophy of the soul and body in your essay.
SUMMARIZING

To become an effective critical reader and successful academic writer, you need to develop the ability to summarize materials accurately and succinctly. You cannot be sure you fully understand the ideas of others unless you are able to express these ideas in your own words. Thus, when you make a written summary of an article that you have read, you, in effect, write to learn ideas and concepts. Sometimes the next step after summarizing ideas from sources is to synthesize these ideas with your own as you learn to write academic research papers (of course, such material summarized from sources must be properly documented). To summarize a reading, you should follow these steps:

1. Read the article more than once to allow the totality of the material to impress itself in your mind. Each time you read, underline or highlight the main ideas and important details and annotate the text by recording in the margin your reactions and any short explanations, questions, arguments, points of comparison, etc. While reading the text, think about the purpose of the text: what did the author intend to do? what are the ideas that he/she wanted to convey? what is the impact on the reader supposed to be?

2. After reading the text, write in your own words in outline form the main ideas and details that you have underlined or highlighted. Add additional information from the notes that you have made in the margins, if appropriate.

3. Examine the outline of main ideas and determine what the author's thesis (central idea) is. You may also have found the thesis statement in the text. Write the thesis in your own words at the top of your outline.

4. Check your outline with the text to see whether you have included all the main ideas in the same order as they are presented in the text and whether the progression of ideas is coherent.

5. Write the first draft of your summary following your outline. Be sure that you are writing in your own words. If you want to quote the author, use quotations marks, but quotation should be held to a minimum (only two to three sentences or short expressions) in a summary of this length. The first sentence should introduce the text by mentioning the author's full name, the full title of the reading, and the type of material (article, chapter, excerpt); the second sentence should be your paraphrase of the thesis. Your statement of the main ideas and major support for them should follow.

6. Reread the first draft of your summary to ensure that it is accurate and comprehensive in stating all the main ideas of the text. A summary should be strictly objective. It should not contain any of your own ideas or interpretations. It should also be concise (no more than one page in length); therefore, you will have to make each sentence serve a specific function in the summary. Your summary should be coherent; it should make sense to someone who has not read the original article. Finally the summary must be independent of the text. The thesis and all the main ideas must be stated in your own words with the exception of direct quotation.

7. Revise for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style.
ESSAY EXAMS

Writing in-class essays for exams, tests, and quizzes is slightly different from out-of-class assignments. First, you only have a limited amount of time. You must make every minute count. Second, your instructors already know the subject; they are trying to determine whether you know it. You must demonstrate clearly that you do. Here are some specific guidelines for writing essay answers.

1. Be aware of the time. If you have only one question to answer in an hour’s time, fines. If you must answer three questions in the same amount of time, divide your time and keep an eye on the clock.

2. Know what is required for the answer. If you do not respond directly to the instruction or question (if you answer some question that was not asked), you put yourself at a disadvantage. Here is a list of key verbs and meanings commonly found in essay instructions:

I. Verbs Asking for Everything
Comment: To explain, illustrate, or criticize the meaning or significance of a subject.
Describe: To give either a detailed or a graphic account of a subject. E.g. Describe France on the eve of the revolution; describe Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.
Discuss: To investigate a subject by argument, going into its pros and cons. E.g. Discuss the impact of missionary society on traditional Hawaiian culture.
Review: To survey and examine critically a subject; either summary, analysis, or criticism.

II. Verbs Asking for Main Ideas
Analyze: To break the subject up into the main ideas which compose it.
Enumerate: To present a numbered list of the main ideas composing the whole of the subject.
List: Same as enumerate.
Tabulate: To organize the main ideas into a scheme of headings such as a table of contents, but sometimes to form into a table.
Trace: To follow the development or history or your subject from the point of its origin. Where appropriate, describe the causes of an event. E.g. Trace the discovery of AIDS in the U.S.
Summarize: To make a brief, concise account of the main ideas of a theme, concept, principle, development or procedures, omitting details and examples, usually without comment or criticism.
Outline: To summarize in a series of headings and subheadings (theme, main ideas, supporting and subordinate ideas)—often a two-stage outline omitting detail. Sometimes used in the sense of “sketch” or “describe.” E.g. Outline the events that brought the U.S. into WWI.

III. Verbs Asking for Certain Specific Characteristics or Certain Limited Facts
Compare: To show the similarities and differences of two or more subjects. E.g. Compare the U.S. and Confederate Constitutions.
Contrast: To show the differences of two or more subjects.
Define: To give the meaning of a word by fitting it into a general category and then distinguishing it from closely related subjects; sometimes developed by examples and illustrations.
Demonstrate: To prove or explain by use of examples or evidence.
Diagram: To describe with graphs, sketches, etc.
Explain: To account for by clearly stating and interpreting the details around a thing to make clear its character, causes, results, reasons, implications, etc. E.g. Explain the reasons for the notion of penetrance in population genetics.
Formulate: To define in the form of a systematic statement.
Illustrate: To clarify by giving examples, comparisons, analogies or by giving figures or diagrams.
Prove: To demonstrate validity by test, reasoning, or evidence.
Relate: To establish the connection between one thing and another. Note this does not mean compare, so if you are asked to relate the American and French revolutions, you are not to compare them but to show how one influences the other.

IV. Verbs Asking for Your Supported Opinion
Choose: Generally, make a choice between one of several interpretations, explanations, etc.
Criticize: Give your judgement on the merit of a theory or opinion or on the truth of facts by discussing their source and background or on the truth, value, or goodness of a thing. Note criticize does not mean “attack angrily.”
Evaluate: To appraise or estimate the worth, value, usefulness, truth, goodness, etc. of something—to some extent on the basis of personal opinion. E.g. Evaluate the role of Disraeli in forming the modern Conservative Party.
Interpret: To explain the meaning or significance of something to make it clear and explicit and to evaluate it in terms of your own knowledge.
Justify: To give good grounds for your decisions or conclusions (sometimes, your instructor’s decisions or conclusions), or the statement made in the question. E.g. Justify Henry Clay’s interpretation of the Constitution.
Select: See choose.

3. Plan. Make a list or brief outline of all the points you can think of. Make decisions about the best organization of your points—the most important information first, the details and specifics after.

4. In writing the essay answer, PROVE IMMEDIATELY that you know the material. Do NOT write an introduction to the topic (your instructor already knows the topic). Begin your answer with a thesis statement which presents the topic and the general idea of your answer. Do NOT treat the essay question as the first sentence of your answer; make your answer self-contained so that someone could read it without reading the essay question, and understand.
5. After you give your answer, support it with additional points and details, and examples for each. Be as specific as possible, and be as well-organized as possible.

6. Write legibly and neatly (remember that instructors may be bored and tired reading all those answers - do not make your instructor struggle with messy or cramped handwriting too!) Leave enough time to PROOFREAD. Check spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Be sure that you have said exactly what you meant.

What should you do if you do not know the answer?

(This is undoubtedly a rare event, but just in case...)

1. Do not panic and do not leave the question blank.

2. Brainstorm for a few minutes, review class discussions, readings in the textbooks, lectures, etc. Make notes on anything and everything that might be possibly related to the question. Include information and ideas that come from other classes or from your own experience. Then pick out the points that can be related to the question.

3. Organize these points well and provide examples (even if you must make them up) if possible.

4. Hope for partial credit. This will be better than nothing.