

## Essay and Outline Example #1

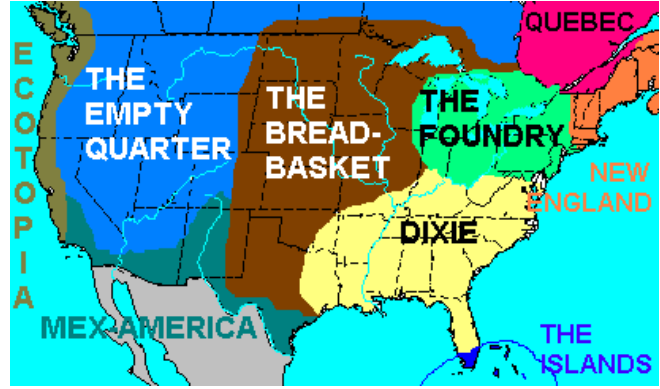
### Here are the instructions you will see for the essay outline section of the test:

It is suggested that you take a few minutes to plan and outline your response. You must answer the questions completely using full sentences and paragraphs. Be sure to include an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement and the main points of your essay. Illustrate your answer with substantive examples where appropriate. It is not enough to answer a question by merely listing facts. You should present a cogent argument based on your critical analysis of the questions posed and your understanding of geography.

### Here is a sample question and outline (this exact question will *not* be on the test):

In 1981 Joel Garreau, a writer for the *Washington Post*, wrote the book: *The Nine Nations of North America*, dividing the territory into separate regions. Use the map to complete the essay:

- Define TWO types of regions. What type of region would South Florida be in?
- Define culture trait and culture complex. Identify ONE particular trait and ONE particular complex that define South Florida.
- Do you agree or disagree with the placement of South Florida in this particular region? Explain.



### How to outline (plan and structure) your essay:

All too often students write a great deal of information but fail to fully answer the entire essay question, or meander off into unconnected tangents that distract the reader from the original question. Here are some tips toward successful outlining (and, in turn, successful essay writing):

**1) Re-read the question:** Read the question through a few times, if necessary. Explain it to yourself, so you are sure you know exactly what it is asking you to do. Be sure to pay attention to the question stem (the sentences that precede the actual question) as they often provide key information as to how best answer the question.

**2) Is the question open-ended or closed?** If it is **open-ended** you will need to narrow down the focus. If it is a **closed** question, your answer must refer to and stay within the limits of the question (i.e. specific dates, countries, or regions).

**3) Break the question down into sub-questions or sub-tasks.** Before you write anything, underline/ circle/ and/or bracket key words and prompts. Here's one example showing how to do it:

- Define TWO types of regions. What type of region would [South Florida] be in?

### 4) A graphic organizer (such as a table) helps structure your answer in a methodical way:

Outline:

	ID	Discussion
<b>A</b>	Formal, functional, perceptual	- Formal – uniform, homogenous; defined & measurable - Perceptual – mental map; vernacular; area of sameness (S. Florida)
<b>B</b>	Culture trait & complex	- Trait = single attribute (Cuban sandwich); Complex = discrete combination of traits (Cuban cuisine & culture)
<b>C</b>	Disagree (w/ placement)	- S. Florida placed in Islands; good for climate & some Caribbean cultures, but doesn't explain cultures from Northern US & other ethnicities (Jewish, Indian, etc.)

### Why outline?

- Makes it much more likely that you will end up with a coherent argument.
- Enables you to work out a logical structure and end point for your essay before you start writing.
- Means you don't have to do this type of complex thinking at the same time as trying to find the most effective words to express your ideas.
- Helps you to commit to staying on point. Figuring out what *NOT* to include is just as valuable as figuring out what to include.