THE ESSAY EXAM

The Secret: Answer the question that was asked, not the one you wished was asked....

GRADING CRITERIA:

Judging how you write:
- well reasoned
- well organized
- clear
- relevant

Judging what you write:
- factually accurate
- complete – well supported
- valid viewpoint

3 PARTS OF AN ESSAY QUESTION

KEY WORD: tells you how to answer the question
- It will be a verb command
- Should you "show" (Explain, Prove, Demonstrate, Illustrate…) or "tell" (List, Discuss, Trace, Describe…)?
- Or is your opinion being asked (Criticize, Justify, Interpret…)?
- It will prescribe your organization: comparison, cause and effect, chronological…

TOPIC: what the question is about
- What your answer should be about
- This word (or its synonyms) will be in most sentences

FOCUS: what part of the topic you should address
- If there is more than one focus, number them so you give a complete answer
- Resist the temptation to tell everything you know about the topic; then you are not staying relevant.