KEY QUESTION SCORING GUIDELINES FOR ALL ESSAYS

The Good-Excellent Essay
• Asserts a strong, clear, and well-developed thesis in response to the key question.
• Supports the thesis with outstanding analysis of Founding documents, custom, legal precedent and contemporary views.
• Intelligently applies and/or critiques the Court’s opinion(s).
• Effectively uses many documents and incorporates prior knowledge.
• Contains only minor errors; is clearly organized and exceptionally well-written.

The Average-Good Essay
• Asserts a thesis in response to the key question.
• Supports the thesis with some analysis of Founding documents, custom, legal precedent and/or contemporary views. Analysis of some aspects may be cursory or absent.
• Critiques and/or applies the Court’s opinion(s), but may demonstrate less command of nuance than the Good-Excellent Essay.
• Effectively uses many documents and incorporates prior knowledge.
• Contains few significant errors; is acceptably organized and written.

The Below Average-Average Essay
• Asserts a limited thesis or does not fully address the key question.
• Analysis is largely incomplete, superficial, or incorrect; may merely paraphrase or quote documents.
• Contains simplistic or incorrect application/critique of the Court’s opinion(s).
• Uses few documents and incorporates little prior knowledge.
• Contains some significant errors and is poorly organized and written.

The Poor-Below Average Essay
• Lacks a thesis.
• Exhibits inadequate understanding of the question and the documents.
• Offers no application/critique of the Court’s opinion(s).
• Uses very few documents and incorporates no prior knowledge.
• Contains numerous significant errors and is poorly organized and written.