

Time Management on Law School Exams

When you read your syllabus at the beginning of the semester, you may see that your final exam is 4 hours long and you may think this is a long time for an exam. However, the time allotted for a law school exam flies by extremely fast. Whether your exam is 2 hours or 4 hours, it is important to have developed solid time management skills before your first exam.

Below are some tips and tricks for how to manage your time on a law school exam:

- ★ **Write out practice hypos before the exam.** As you get closer to exams starting, you should treat each practice hypo you do as if it is the actual exam. Set a timer and see how much you can complete during that time. The more practice you complete, the more proficient and quicker you will become. You should also practice writing multiple hypothetical answers in a row. This will help you build up stamina for when you get to the exam and have to answer multiple questions.
- ★ **Strategize before the exam.** Before the exam, you should come up with a plan of attack for how you will answer questions. Some people like to answer the questions chronologically, while others look through all the questions first. Some will start with the easiest question first, while others will start with the hardest. If you decide on a strategy before you walk into the exam you will not waste time on the exam deciding how you will answer the questions.
- ★ **Read the exam instructions carefully before the exam starts.** Your professors will include important exam instructions specific to their exams on Examplify. You can read these before the exam starts once the exam proctor gives you permission to read through the exam instructions. Read these prior to the exam starting so you do not waste time reading them once the exam starts
- ★ **Read the call of the question before starting to read the hypo.** This will save you time because you will know exactly what you are looking for within the hypo before you even start to read it. If the question asks you to find and write about all the intentional torts, you should focus solely on the intentional torts. This means that you can ignore any causes of action for negligence. Writing about negligence or strict liability when the call of the question only asks you about intentional torts is a waste of time and will not get you points.
- ★ **Use the alarm feature on Examplify.** Examplify has a tool where you can set an alarm to go off on your screen for the amount of time you select. The alarm is silent, so it will not disrupt any other test-takers in the room. Use this feature to keep track of your time.
- ★ **Follow the suggested amount of time.** If your professor suggests a certain amount of time per question, follow this. You should stick to this and move on to the next question after the allotted amount of time, even if you are not finished with the question you are on. This ensures that you get to each question before the time is up. Professors usually correlate the number of points a question is worth to the amount of time you should spend

on it. By following the time recommendations, you will ensure that you are able to answer each question and maximize the amount of points you get.

- ★ **Read the question or hypo twice if you have to.** It is important that you fully understand that hypo and question. Take the time you need to closely read and understand all the exam materials before starting to write. It will cost you more time to constantly have to go back to the question or hypo to check for facts you missed on a quick read through.
- ★ **Plan out what you are going to write.** On every exam, you will receive scrap paper. Use this scrap paper to outline your answer. You will do much better, and your answer will be more organized if you have a solid outline before you start typing. It will also save you time from having to rewrite portions of your answer because you realize you missed an issue, or are not writing in the correct order.
- ★ **Pause.** Law school exams can be hours long and involve a lot of typing. If you need to, you can always pause, stop typing, and take a deep breath. This will help you collect your thoughts and let your fingers rest for a minute. Taking five seconds to do this will help you reset and continue working.
- ★ **Be realistic.** Know that you might not have time to write about every issue that you spot on the exam. Often, there will be many more issues in a law school exam than you have time to write about. Come up with a system for keeping track of what issues you see. Make a list of what issues you think you should write about from most important to least important. If you have time in the end, you can then come back to the least important issues and write about those.