

# HOW TO WRITE A GOOD MIDTERM / FINAL EXAM

## PHYSIOLOGY

Students write four mid-term tests in each semester. The tests cover the topics of the related theoretical material. Each midterm in the course of physiology are 40 minutes long and contains 3 main parts: MCQ test, figure analysis, and essay (in case of the final exam, two essays). This document will help you understand how we correct and evaluate these parts, hopefully it can help you write a perfect midterm.

Before we start discussing the individual chapters, it is useful to know how we weight the subparts in the final result. Midterm results on each part are percentages that are converted into points which students collect during a semester. According to their importance, the percentages are the following:

	Midterms			Final exam	
	percentage	points		percentage	points
Test	35	7	Test	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>
Figure Analysis	15	3	Figure Analysis	15	15
Essay	<b>50</b>	<b>10*</b>	Essay 1	25	25*
maximum points:	100%	20	Essay 2	25	25*
			maximum points:	100%	100

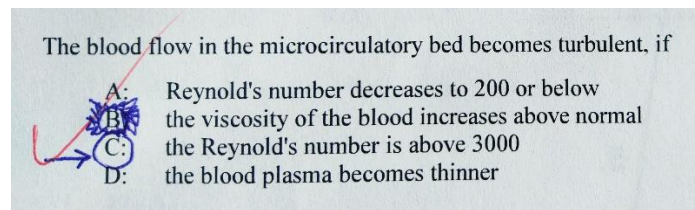
\*The essay represents the most important (and the hardest) part of every midterm/exam

### 1. Simple choice test

The test part consists of 15 simple choice questions in case of a midterm, and 35 questions in case of a final exam. The questions are from the lecture materials ([click here to download](#)), or you could hear it on the lectures. Please note that we update our lecture notes regularly before every semester. Every good answer results in one point. (FYI: In the “[extended entrance tests](#)”, we use the same question pool so the rules are the same there in case you need to write one.)

Rule no 1: Read the questions carefully. We will not ask cunning or deceptive questions, every one of them will have one straightforward answer. **You have time to understand the meaning and think about it, don't rush through the first part.** Also, **do not leave questions blank.** Even if you don't know the answer there is a 25% chance that you will successfully guess the good one. We will only count the good answers so feel free to guess.

Always mark one answer only, otherwise it will count as a failed answer. You can correct your answer if you change your mind but **please clearly** indicate your final choice. You can see an example clear indication below:



Every question should have a straightforward answer, if you have **doubts feel free to ask the supervising teacher** about it during the midterm/exam. If you think that the question has two possible answers, always aim the best one.

## 2. Figure analysis

This part contains a typical, easily recognizable picture from our lecture notes. It often decrypts a physiological process in which some of the parts are missing.

Do not rush and fill the blanks, always read the description (usually directly above or below the figure), and try to understand the process first. Carefully study the different parts available and the parts missing. If you are confident, and you already know the process, you can start answering the questions below.

Please note that sometimes, there are missing parts of the figure that you have to draw or fill in the figure.

## 3. Essay

Before you starting your essay, **carefully read the question.**

On the midterms, often, we indicate the specific parts you should focus on (in the title – indicated with the yellow highlight in the example). Please include every topic in your essay that are indicated in the header. We know this sounds obvious but during the stress of the midterm some of the students tend to forget to cover all of the topics.

Essay question (please write max. 2 pages!)

Species differences of the female reproductive cycle: selection of dominant follicles in large animals, types of estruses

In case of the final exam, you get the essay topic the same way you find it on [our website](#).

Important notes:

Try to **imagine the structure** of the text you want to write down (even make small notes in the upper corners). After you have a mental image of the structure, read the title again, and compare it to your concept. Students often start writing about the topic but in the middle they

get lost thus they drift away from the original question and write a page of unnecessary text. Obviously, no rewards for failing topics. **Only write about the topic asked!**

We suggest that you start with a short **introduction**, just setting the context. This way, you help us to follow your thoughts, your structure. Why is the physiological function important? What does it do? In what organ / function / process is it important? Don't forget to frame (by adding introduction and conclusion) your essay. **Framing an essay helps you organize your writing process** and the department will see that you understand the given topic. Usually a well written **short** introduction earns you at least 10% on the essay.

Give **definitions** on the most important scientific words related to the topic asked. Also, use **precise terms** and clear sentences.

**Do not write "textwalls"**. If your text is not structured, it is quite easy to overlook some vital information, therefore you get less percentage than you would deserve based on your physiology knowledge (usually, 2 person reads your essay but you should minimize this chance). Please show your understanding on the topic not your language proficiency. **Include drawings, bullet point, paragraphs**. This way, the time and energy you spend on the writing will be way less than writing 2 pages full of text, therefore **you will have more time to double check the contents of your essay** after finishing it. (And more importantly, we are not hiding the truth: this makes our life easier, as well.)

## **Other tips**

During the semester, at least once, **take a good look at your midterm after receiving your points**. The exact date and time is always in the email containing your results or you can see it on our webpage above the points. Carefully study the correcting key and process. This way you will see what needs to be included in your next midterms, and you can learn from your mistakes.