

These comments are from 2 people who have been AP readers for years. The first one is the person who wrote the Teacher's Guide and Research binder for our textbook. The second person has an intro to psychology book that is used in high schools across the country. They are reliable, knowledgeable sources. They are representative of the people who read your FRQ's. PLEASE read these, and take their suggestions to heart. Some of it will be familiar, as I have been saying some of these things all year. Some people are still not writing the FRQ's the way that the people below and I have been advocating.

- The hard and fast rule for AP FRQs is that it must be written in complete sentences. It must resemble an "essay" response in the most basic way by using complete sentences. Most other conventions of what perhaps English or history teachers think of as "essays" are not necessary, but are also not penalized. I like to tell students that the AP Psych FRQ is more like what is known as "technical writing" rather than "essay" writing. I tell them to stick to the issues and not worry so much about all the rest.

However, it is helpful for readers, in my experience, when students use organizational strategies to distinguish among the points being made. Some students use spaces between paragraphs. Others use bullet-point-type symbols. Still others underline or even highlight each point.

The reader will not "stop grading" the FRQ if the student has a bullet point or produces a response that on the surface looks like a bulleted list. The reader will read the response to see if there are complete sentences with enough information provided to score a point.

Please assure your students that the readers are keenly interested in giving students credit where due. They are not looking for "gotcha" technicalities that will deny students credit for formatting or bad grammar or other stuff not related to knowledge of introductory psychology. They want to see psychological concepts applied appropriately for the prompt presented in a basic essay format, and if that happens, students will earn points.

Hope this helps,

Amy Fineburg
OMHS
Shelby County, AL

- For those of you who are struggling with what to convey to your students on this, I urge you to reread Amy Fineburg's contribution to this thread. (See above.) As usual, her advice is spot on. In fact, you may want to read it directly to your students.

By the way, the instructions students receive when they're taking the test read, "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 question posed." **I tell my students that the easiest essays to score are constructed of concise sentences organized into short paragraphs. They should try to determine the number of points on the rubric (usually pretty easy) and write one paragraph for each of those points.**

Best,
Charlie

Charles Blair-Broeker
Cedar Falls (Iowa) High School