

Preparing for FRQ's

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General rules

- What are the requirements for the question - list, describe, cause and effect...
- If it asks anything besides identify, you should write at least two sentences. One stating your clear, specific answer and the second providing supporting evidence, examples or a detailed description.
- Know the difference between environmental, social, political and economic effects.
- How many examples are requested? If the question asks for two, only the first two will be graded
- If you are not sure about the meaning of a word in the question, figure out what it means by pulling apart the syllables (anthropogenic – anthro (man) genic (origin or made) is man-made)
- Start each question with whether it is A, B, C,... and leave a two to three line break between each section so you can come back later to add additional information
- Do not rewrite the question; it is a waste of time for you and the reader
- If you find yourself writing something vague, follow it up with a specific example. (Name a specific chemical that will cause the pollution and explain its impacts, name a specific specie or type of specie that would be impacted and explain how, name a specific law or specific possible law that will illustrate whatever you are talking about, etc.)
- If a fourth grader could say it, it is too vague.
- Be careful with absolutes, will it really kill all the animals? Will the entire ecosystem be harmed?
- Often wrong but never in doubt: even if you are making it up, make it sound good and confident. (Be specific. You might be right, but you will not get any credit if you are not specific enough. No "maybe" or "might" unless there is actual scientific uncertainty.)

Basic rules for a non-math question

- Make sure the answers are legible
- Always use complete sentences.
- Each answer should be organized, comprehensive, and in prose form; outline form is not acceptable.
- Drawings are acceptable only if there is a written explanation
- No eco-babble, flowery, or vague phrases

If the question is math-based

- Do not write anything in the green book so all your work will be in the answer document
- Even if you can do the math in your head, show each step
- Include units in each step to insure it is correct and in the answer
- Does the answer make sense? A monthly light bill for a family should not be in the trillions of dollars.

There are several strategies you can use to help boost your score on the Free Response section of the AP Environmental Science exam. One of those strategies is to avoid the use of vague and "flowery" terms and phrases. These terms and phrases may sound descriptive, but they frequently say little and provide none of the detail needed to earn credit. To avoid them you should try to explain yourself as best as possible using more detail.