

# Bar Exam Sample Answers

## HOW TO ANSWER BAR EXAM ESSAY QUESTIONS IMPRESSIVELY

Sharing tips from my Criminal Law Professor Atty. Ruben C. Talampas, Jr.

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By: Atty. Ruben C. Talampas, Jr.

The then Chairperson of the Committee on Bar Examinations, Madame Justice Amnurfina Melencio-Herrera, submitted a report to the Philippine Supreme Court her observations on the 1980 bar exams.

*According to her several examinees have made very unsatisfactory showing to such an extent that there is one who obtained a grade as low as 7% another obtained a grade of 11%; still some others obtained grades of 12%; 16%; 17%; 18%; 19%; 20%; 21%; 24%; 25%; 26%; 27%; 31%; 34%; etc."*

She pointed out the general weakness of the bar examinees. She said: "The reason for this high mortality rate, may be attributed to several factors among them in the opinion of the undersigned, may be due mainly to the following: . . . inadequate command of the English language".

*She further emphasized: "The examinees inhabiting the lowermost rungs of the grading scale manifested not alone an appalling lack of knowledge of the fundamental principles involved in the examination questions but also an inability to logically string their thoughts together compounded by an almost incredible deficiency in language skills."*

It was less than 35 years ago but still her remarks seem to be true at present.

The following are actual questions and answers of some examinees which demonstrate their lack of knowledge of the fundamental legal principles and inadequate command of the English language:

*Question No. 6(b) – "An accused was found guilty of double murder and was meted out two sentences of reclusion perpetua. How would the accused serve the sentences?"*

*Answer – "Both penalties must be served by the accused, and he was electrocuted and died then it washes out the remaining sentence to served by the accused."*

*Question No. 11 – "Patrolman Cruz, acting under orders of the Municipal Mayor, Who wanted to put a stop to the frequent occurrence of robbery in Sitio Masukal, patrolled the place. At about midnight, seeing three persons acting suspiciously in*

**Bar exam sample answers** play a crucial role in the preparation process for aspiring attorneys. They serve as invaluable resources that help candidates understand the expectations of examiners, the structure of ideal responses, and the application of legal principles to hypothetical scenarios. This article will delve into the significance of bar exam sample answers, effective strategies for utilizing them, and tips for crafting your own standout responses.

## Understanding Bar Exam Sample Answers

Bar exam sample answers are representative responses to exam questions from previous bar exams

or practice tests. They provide a framework for how to approach the exam and outline how to analyze legal issues effectively. Sample answers typically cover various subjects, including contracts, torts, criminal law, constitutional law, civil procedure, and more.

## **Purpose of Bar Exam Sample Answers**

The primary purposes of bar exam sample answers include:

1. **Guidance on Structure:** They demonstrate how to structure a legal analysis effectively, including the use of IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion) or other methods.
2. **Understanding Exam Expectations:** They clarify what examiners are looking for in terms of depth of analysis, clarity of writing, and application of legal principles.
3. **Identifying Key Issues:** Sample answers highlight important issues that should be recognized and addressed in the response.
4. **Examining Style and Tone:** They provide examples of appropriate legal language and tone to use in responses.
5. **Benchmark for Self-Assessment:** Candidates can compare their practice answers to sample answers to identify areas for improvement.

## **How to Effectively Use Bar Exam Sample Answers**

While bar exam sample answers are beneficial, candidates must employ effective strategies to maximize their utility. Here are some methods to consider:

### **Review and Analyze Sample Answers**

1. **Read Actively:** As you read through sample answers, engage with the text by underlining key phrases and annotating important points. This will help you internalize the structure and content.
2. **Identify Key Components:** Break down the sample answers into their constituent parts—issues, rules, applications, and conclusions. This will help you understand how to craft your own responses.
3. **Compare with Your Own Answers:** After writing your answers to practice questions, compare them against sample answers. Look for differences in legal analysis, clarity, and thoroughness.

### **Practice Writing Your Own Answers**

1. **Use Practice Questions:** Work through past bar exam questions or practice tests and write your responses without referring to sample answers initially. This will help you develop your analytical

skills without reliance on external guidance.

2. Adopt a Similar Structure: After analyzing sample answers, try to mimic their structure in your own writing. Use the IRAC method or any other organizational framework that you find effective.

3. Seek Feedback: Share your practice answers with peers or mentors who have experience in bar exam preparation. Their feedback will be invaluable in refining your responses.

## **Components of a Strong Bar Exam Answer**

Writing a strong answer is essential for success on the bar exam. Here are the key components to include:

### **1. Issue Identification**

Clearly identify the legal issues presented in the fact pattern. This is often the first step in the IRAC method and sets the stage for the analysis.

- Use clear, concise language.
- Frame the issues in terms of the legal principles involved.

### **2. Rule Statement**

State the relevant legal rules or doctrines that apply to the identified issues. This section should include:

- An accurate representation of the law.
- Any applicable statutes, case law, or legal principles.

### **3. Application of the Law**

This is the heart of your answer where you apply the law to the facts provided in the question. Consider the following:

- Use the facts from the question to support your legal analysis.
- Discuss both sides of an argument if applicable, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the complexities of the law.

### **4. Conclusion**

Wrap up your answer with a clear and concise conclusion that summarizes your findings. Ensure that

your conclusion directly addresses the legal issues identified at the beginning of your response.

## **Common Mistakes to Avoid in Bar Exam Answers**

Even the most prepared candidates can fall into traps that may hinder their performance. Here are some common mistakes to avoid:

### **1. Lack of Organization**

An unstructured answer can confuse examiners and make it difficult for them to follow your reasoning. Stick to a clear format, like IRAC, to maintain coherence.

### **2. Ignoring the Call of the Question**

Always ensure that your answer addresses the specific question asked. Avoid the temptation to write about every legal principle you know; focus on what is relevant.

### **3. Being Too Vague or General**

Examiners are looking for specific, detailed analysis. Avoid general statements and provide concrete examples and citations where applicable.

### **4. Failing to Manage Time Effectively**

Time management is critical during the bar exam. Practice writing answers within a set time limit to simulate exam conditions and refine your pacing.

## **Resources for Finding Bar Exam Sample Answers**

Candidates can access bar exam sample answers through various resources:

1. **State Bar Websites:** Many state bar associations provide sample answers or past exam questions on their websites.
2. **Commercial Bar Review Courses:** Programs such as BarBri, Kaplan, and Themis often include sample answers as part of their study materials.
3. **Law School Resources:** Check with your law school's library or academic support office for guides and resources.

4. Online Forums and Communities: Websites like Reddit or specialized forums for bar exam preparation can offer shared resources and sample answers from fellow candidates.

## **Conclusion**

Bar exam sample answers are essential tools for effective preparation, providing insight into how to tackle exam questions and present legal analysis. By studying and analyzing these samples, practicing writing, and avoiding common pitfalls, candidates can enhance their chances for success. As you prepare for the bar exam, remember to focus on clarity, organization, and a thorough understanding of the law, all of which will contribute to crafting compelling answers on exam day.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are bar exam sample answers and why are they important?**

Bar exam sample answers are model responses to essay questions on the bar exam, designed to illustrate how to effectively analyze and write about legal issues. They are important because they help candidates understand the expectations of the examiners, including the structure, depth of analysis, and application of law.

### **Where can I find high-quality bar exam sample answers?**

High-quality bar exam sample answers can be found on various legal education websites, bar review course materials, and law school resources. Additionally, many bar exam prep books include sample answers for practice.

### **How should I use bar exam sample answers in my study preparation?**

You should use bar exam sample answers to familiarize yourself with the types of questions that may appear on the exam, learn effective writing techniques, and evaluate your own practice responses by comparing them to the samples.

### **What characteristics make a bar exam sample answer effective?**

An effective bar exam sample answer should be well-organized, demonstrate a clear understanding of the law, provide thorough analysis and application of legal principles, and address all parts of the question directly and concisely.

### **Can I rely solely on bar exam sample answers for my exam preparation?**

While bar exam sample answers are a valuable resource, you should not rely solely on them. It is



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