TEN EASY STEPS TO TAKING THE REGENTS’ TEST

1. Read the topics given to you. Choose the one you have had most experience with.

2. Make a list of everything on this topic you have ever seen happen. If you see you have had very little experience in this area, you should choose another topic.

3. Classify the events on your list into three categories. Make certain these three categories are parallel: three cases, three examples, three solutions, three causes, three kinds, three effects, three problems, or three reasons.

4. Add to your list some evidence you have read or heard or seen on TV.

5. Write your thesis statement including:
   a. your answer to the Regents’ Test question
   b. what your essay will be about
   c. some key word or words indicating your rhetorical pattern
   d. some indication of your purpose
   e. the names of your three topics.

6. On scratch paper, make a topic outline of your essay, using evidence from your list under each of your three topics.

7. On this same scratch paper, write your three topic sentences. Each of these topic sentences must prove your thesis is true, but each one must be your opinion, not a fact.

8. Read over the outline of everything you will include in your essay. Now write a thoughtful or catchy concluding sentence on your scratch paper.

9. Begin your essay with an interesting title. Use capital letters for all the words except the articles and the prepositions.

10. Open the introductory paragraph with a statement that will make your reader remember you for a long time. Remember, the Regents’ Test grader has been reading student papers all day. S/he is tired and irritable. S/he is bored. S/he wants to read something interesting, even outrageous, but not something awkward. Lead gracefully and smoothly into your thesis statement at the end of this introductory paragraph. Now read over the paragraph and correct any mistakes that are sure to cause the reader to give up on you before s/he reads your entire essay. What is the tone of your introduction? Be sure to maintain the tone throughout.