1. Highlight or underline all of the issue statements in your exam answer.

2. Compare your answer to the sample answer provided for this exam. If you missed an issue:
   a. You may have missed a triggering fact that gave rise to an issue.
      OUR ADVICE: Go through the exam fact pattern and match all issues from the checklist to
      triggering facts. For triggering facts that are unclear, return to your synthesized course outline to
      review the relevant law and case examples.
   b. You may not have memorized your exam approach outline (“checklist” or “attack plan”) fully.
      OUR ADVICE: Continue with your memorization practice in a way that is best tailored to your
      preferred learning style.
   c. Your exam approach outline may not be complete enough.
      OUR ADVICE: Return to your synthesized outline to reconstruct your exam approach outline
      with all the issues from your course.

3. For each issue you identified, identify the corresponding rule statement. If you did not clearly
   connect a rule statement to each issue:
   a. You may not know the appropriate rule to use.
      OUR ADVICE: Return to your synthesized outline, and review your discussion of that issue
      and the applicable rules. Memorize the rule statement. Practice working with that rule using
      hypotheticals.
   b. You may have thought the rule was obvious and didn’t write it into your answer.
      OUR ADVICE: Remember that there are no obvious rules on a law school exam. Every
      relevant legal rule, term of art, and concept should be defined at least once in your exam to get
      full points. Don’t sketch over a rule, leaving your professor guessing as to whether or not you
      know the law.
   c. You may have attempted to weave the rule into your analysis.
      OUR ADVICE: Review your application section and identify the sentences where you wove
      facts and law together. If the law is not explicit, remember that you must make it so on an exam,
      even if it is being woven into the analysis.

4. For each issue and rule you identified, identify the corresponding application section. Did you:
   a. Incorporate all the relevant facts into your analysis?
      OUR ADVICE: Generally, all the facts in an exam question should be incorporated into your
      essay response. If you did not use one of the facts given in the exam question, determine if it is
      truly irrelevant or if it connects to an element of a rule that you didn’t analyze.
   b. Weave together facts and law, and use “because”s?
      OUR ADVICE: Remember that facts and rule statements must be clearly connected together to
      demonstrate that you understand how they relate. If facts in your application section are floating
      alone, determine how to link them to a rule.
c. Analogize/distinguish relevant case examples?
   **OUR ADVICE:** Cases should be incorporated into your application discussion only if they directly correspond to the facts, and help to flesh-out the conclusion that you will raise.

d. Include policy arguments?
   **OUR ADVICE:** Policy arguments, social or other goals furthered by a specific law and outcome, should be included if: your professor has instructed you to do so, you have already written a full purely legal analysis of the issue, and a policy argument is truly implicated by the exam question.

5. For each issue, rule, and application, identify the conclusion. If you did not include a conclusion:

a. You may have assumed the conclusion was obvious:
   **OUR ADVICE:** Never assume a conclusion is obvious.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- **If I did everything right above, will I get an A in this course?** This guide is not designed to determine what your grade might be. Its purpose is to help students analyze their exams, and begin to improve their exam-writing skills. *Every practice exam answer can be improved on, and that should be your goal.* This tool identifies many of the common issues that come up in 1L practice exams, but there are certainly other ways to improve your exam answer (for instance, use of headings, transitions, and other structures to ensure ease of reading and understanding; clear and concise writing with correct spelling, grammar, and tone; and including creative, but legally grounded arguments.)

- **Rewrite your exam answer.** By rewriting your answer, you will strengthen your understanding of the law through correcting the mistakes you made the first time. In addition, most law school exams follow a similar pattern. By rewriting, you will build your muscle memory as it relates to the typical fact patterns and exam scenarios, making you better prepared for the actual exam.

- **Exchange answers with a classmate.** Your classmate might catch mistakes that you missed during your own diagnosis of the exam. And by reading a classmate’s answer, you will see another way of writing the answer, giving you more information on how to approach such a question in the future.

- **Do more writing practice.** Many professors make available their old exam questions on Camino or through the Law Library. There are also a number of practice questions from supplements, Bar study providers, and the California Bar Exam in the ASP Resource Room in Bannan 230-H.

- **Should I send/take my practice exam to my professor?** Each professor has a different preference. Generally professors want their students to do their own diagnosis of how they did on practice exams, as this self-diagnosis is an important exam preparation skill. Professors who do talk to students about practice exams generally will address specific questions about points of law, but usually do not have the time to review and comment on full practice exams for students.

- **Additional Resource:** Mastering the Law School Exam by Suzanne Darrow-Kleinhaus provides some excellent advice on preparing for, taking, and reviewing essay exams. Copies are available to borrow from the ASP Resource Room in Bannan 230-H.