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Bar Exam Blues But at least you can do well

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A review of Scoring High on Bar Exam Essays, by Mary Campbell Gallagher. First Edition, 1991, Prentice Hall, New York. [Third Edition, 2006, BarWrite Press, New York, \$50.95.]

How is your bar studying coming? Did you master all of those intricate property rules? Well, if you're ready for the multistate, maybe you should start thinking about writing essays. *Scoring High on Bar Exam Essays*, by Mary Campbell Gallagher, offers a detailed, methodical approach to analyzing essay questions and writing organized answers. At a price of [\$50.95], it is surely the least expensive assistance you'll ever get on the most important exam you'll ever take.

Part I of the book, *About the Bar Examination*, provides informational material about the book itself, the grading of bar exam essays, and general principles of essay writing. Part II

provides a specific method for reading, outlining, and writing a bar exam essay and Part III provides 80 sample essay questions and answers. The book is complete, and its approach to bar essays is nothing short of thorough.

Will it help you on the bar exam? In all likelihood, the answer is a resounding yes. By itself, the background and informational material is extremely useful at explaining the "ground rules." In particular, detailed information is given about how the graders view their role and your role. This view from the other side is quite enlightening and will keep you focused on writing the kinds of answers the graders are looking for. Although I don't want to give away the book's secrets, it is fair to say that this information could help you a great deal by helping you to avoid the

natural pitfalls students fall into.

Information aside, the real value of the book is in its method. It provides a concrete approach to essays that is well explained and easy to apply with some practice. This is not a list of ideas such as using active verbs and topic sentences. Rather, it is a system that explains how to first dissect the question and then construct an answer. It may not be for everybody, but I found it useful. For those of you (like me) to whom writing essays is something less than natural, this book will help provide you with the structure you need to write well. If you are looking for some help with your essay writing at a very low price (your firm will laugh if you ask them to cover this one), you should find this book quite useful.