

Weekly Paragraph

	<i>Excellent (A)</i>	<i>Good (A-/B+)</i>	<i>Fair (B)</i>	<i>Poor (B- and below)</i>
<i>Interpretation</i>	Answer to question is original, insightful, and convincing.	Answer to question is reasonable and convincing.	Answer to question is reasonable, but a bit vague or superficial.	Answer to the question is unclear, incoherent, and/or unconvincing.
<i>Reasoning and use of evidence</i>	Reasoning behind interpretation is thoroughly, convincingly, and clearly explained using ample evidence. Reasoning reveals a sophisticated understanding of the assigned text, the discipline, and field of US history.	Reasoning behind interpretation is fairly clearly and convincingly explained using evidence. Reasoning draws on the assigned text and reflects a solid understanding of the discipline and the field of US history.	Reasoning behind interpretation has some merit, but it is also occasionally unclear, shallow, and/or unconvincing. Uses little evidence. Reasoning suggests minimal engagement and/or understanding of the assigned text, the discipline, and/or the field of US history.	Paragraph does not provide coherent reasoning behind its interpretation.
<i>Focus and organization</i>	Topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. Body of the paragraph explains that point clearly and concisely. Each sentence advances the argument of the paragraph. Each sentence leads to the next in order to fully develop and explain the main idea.	Topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. Body of the paragraph explains that point. Most sentences advance the argument of the paragraph, but a few may stray slightly off-topic. Most sentences are organized so as to logically lead the reader from one idea to the next.	Topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. Body of paragraph meanders off that main point quite a bit, and/or does not systematically advance that main point.	Topic sentence does not state the main idea of the paragraph, or does not state it fully. Body of the paragraph does not adequately explain that point. Sentences are frequently off-topic and/or disorganized.
<i>Mechanics and clarity of writing</i>	Writing is clear and accessible. Author uses clean and correct grammar and uses words correctly. Provides accurate and thorough citations for its evidence and ideas in Chicago Style.	Writing is reasonably clear and accessible. Author uses mostly correct grammar and uses most words correctly. All evidence is cited, but there are some minor problems with completeness or format of some citations.	Writing is a bit difficult to follow. Author makes a number of mistakes in terms of grammar and word usage. Some pieces of evidence are unreferenced or inaccurately referenced, and there are problems with completeness and format of citations.	Writing is unclear, with frequent poor grammar and word usage. Evidence is unreferenced.