

History Essay Grading Rubric

(Applicable to Short Essays & Research Papers)

CMU Dept. of History Dr. Vagel Keller (vck@andrew.cmu.edu)

Argument 30%	Evidence 30%	Clarity 20%	Synthesis & Analysis 20%
<p><i>Points awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clear thesis statement •Consistent overall organization around theme •Clear explanation, throughout the paper, of how evidence presented is relevant to the thesis •Clear relevance of argument to the question asked 	<p><i>Points awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Evidence clearly related to thesis statement •Evidence is sufficient to answer the question asked •Moderate use of direct quotations •Proper documentation of sources (footnotes properly formatted) 	<p><i>Points awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Proper grammar •Appropriate essay structure •Use of linking words (however, although, etc) to guide reader through the essay •Use of strong topic sentences to link the evidence in the paragraph to the overall topic 	<p><i>Points awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Originality of thought •Ability to make links between different historical events or sources •Sensitivity to biases, limitations, etc. of sources •Understanding and application of theories of history to material under study
<p><i>Points deducted for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of clear thesis statement •Repeated departures from the stated topic •Essay topic not clearly related to the assigned topic 	<p><i>Points deducted for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Evidence unrelated to question asked •Insufficient evidence •Incorrectly documented or undocumented sources •Factual inaccuracies 	<p><i>Points deducted for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poor grammar •No clear structure to paragraphs or to the essay in general •Misspelled words, typos, improper punctuation •Weak topic sentences 	<p><i>Points deducted for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A “narrative” approach to your topic - chiefly descriptive, rather than analytical •Lack of sensitivity to the type, bias, and limitations of sources used •Basing arguments on assumptions, not facts