**Topic Sentence Guide**

Topic sentences are an important part of effective history writing. In this essay, I will be reading the topic sentences of your body paragraphs closely, and they will be a major component of your grade.

Good topic sentences need to do two things:

1. Say what the paragraph will be about.
2. Relate the topic of your paragraph to the overall argument of your essay.

**For example:**

Imagine the following essay question:

Why was Rome a great civilization? Identify the three most important factors in Rome’s success.

You decide to answer the essay question with the following thesis statement:

Rome was a great civilization because of its geography, laws and architecture.

Based on this thesis statement, your first body paragraph will be about geography. Read the sample topic sentences below:

**Ineffective topic sentences:**

Rome had lots of geography.

Roman geography was important.

Rome is located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

One reason Rome was a great civilization was its geography.

**Effective topic sentence:**

Due to its location in the Mediterranean Sea and the protection offered by surrounding mountains, Rome’s geography helped make it a great civilization.

**1. Next to each of the topic sentences above, explain why it was effective or ineffective.**

**2. In the space below, write an effective topic sentence about Rome’s law or architecture.**