

# What You Do with the Practice Essay Feedback AND How Grading Works with All Unit Essays

[Link to a file at the website](#)

What's on This Webpage:

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## ***Making Sure I Try to Be Clear about the Limits of What I Am Saying***

I stress what works based on learning history. I stress what is necessary:

- For academic standards when you are doing work about something that is **real** (such as biology, business, or history)  
**Tip:** If you think these things are **not** standards, then we need to talk. I can make pages from *The Bedford Handbook* (WCJC's chosen standard) visible to you and we can talk them through.
- For jobs that pay well in the workplace. – As the first lines of each of the standards in the Evidence Checklist say, no workplace will pay for anything else. (Click [here to see the Evidence Checklist.](#))
- For decisions that have consequence on your success and your life

HOWEVER, if bosses or professors say to do the opposite, then do that for them. That is the right thing to do.

Click [here to hear a voice explanation of how grading works and how this process works.](#)

## ***Making Sure I Stress My Positive View Toward Each of You and Why I Use Extra Credit for This Assignment***

- My goal is **not** to zap you, but to make sure you are forewarned so someone else does not zap you.
- I look at these issues as **accidental misunderstandings** that you have. In my surveys of my students for the last 4 (now more than 4) terms, **over** 50% of students had a misunderstanding of **most** of these things, including plagiarism and “half-copy” plagiarism but especially factual accuracy.  
I have **no** problems with your brains or your ethics!  
I am concerned you have a misunderstanding that can get you zapped in your future.
- As proof of my positive position toward you:
  - I record a *real* grade for your work on the Practice Essay (History Changes Essay).  
*Why?* So you can tell the percentage you will make on the 50-point assignments (2 essays each at 25 points) if you keep working as you are. If you made a 4 on the 10-point Practice Essay and did the same manner of

working on the 50-point essays, you would get only 20 points (40% of 50 = 20).

- If you follow the instructions below, I record all of the extra credit I have promised. **If you cannot tell what to do, talk to me. I am glad to help you.**  
*Why?* Because I do **not** think people should be zapped for having a misunderstanding. That is why you can get extra credit to cover any low grade.
- If you change how you work in the future, you will not only learn history a lot better (my goal for all this), but practice skills to help you for your entire life. **Practice being the person you want to be.**

### ***Before You Look at Your Feedback with the Evidence Rubric, Let's Look at How the Rubric Works***

Click [here to hear a voice explanation of How the Evidence Rubric Works with the Practice Essay](#)—and essay on a single topic (a single part) but you have to understand all the other parts if you are going to make sense.

#### **First, Let's Look at the Evidence Rubric If the Student Were Absolutely Perfect (100% on Every Row) with the Practice Essay**

I will talk about these things in the order listed:

- Notice the Concept column and notice that 90% of the points are from the first two rows:
  - Reading for Evidence is worth 60% of the entire grade (or 6 out of 10 points for this essay).
  - Writing with Evidence is worth 30% of the entire grade (or 3 out of 10 points for this essay).
- Notice the headings that start with “A” Paper Criteria, “B” criteria and so on. Notice what the big deal for an “A” Paper is *teaching* the content for the **question** that Blackboard asks you and teaching it in a common sense way as you would with a relative perhaps your own age. If you want more detail on teaching your smart cousin, click [here](#).
- Notice that the last two rows are only 5% each (or ½ a point out of 10 points for this essay). As the voice explanation says, pretty words that are not true will not earn many points. While writing well matters, in this course the priority has to learning history.
- Lastly, notice that 100 Scale Grade and the Point Scale and next we are going to look at what happens when I enter something in that column.

If you do not see the rubric with perfect scores, click [here](#).

Concept	"A" Paper Criteria	"B" Paper Criteria	"C" Paper Criteria	"D" Paper Criteria	"F" Paper Criteria	100 Scale Grade	Point Scale Grade	
Reading for Evidence (60%)	Accurately read all of the content and analyzed to understand the unique and common traits of each part.	Accurately read all of the content and tried to analyze.	Accurately read all of the content, but did not try to analyze.	Misread, read passively, or made errors (such as cherry-picking facts or embellishing facts).	Assumed. Used an unreliable source or an incorrect or incomplete part of the required source.	100	6.00	
Writing with Evidence (30%)	Taught your smart cousin the content for the part in the question. Provided clear examples.	Revealed some of the content for the part in the question. Provided few examples.	Summarized somewhat but did not reveal the content for the part in the question.	Wrote passively (including plagiarism or "half-copy" plagiarism). Used "" inaccurately.	Wrote opinions or assumptions. Used "" inaccurately and changed the meaning.	100	3.00	
Following Directions for Evidence (5%)	Followed the directions exactly.	Followed the directions carefully.	Followed the directions.	Followed some directions.	Did not follow directions on the maximum length and/or source.	100	0.50	
Mechanics (5%)	No mechanical errors.	One mechanical error.	Two or more mechanical errors.	Several mechanical errors.	Many mechanical errors.	100	0.50	
Essay Point Value:						10	Total Grade	10.00

## Second, Let's Look at Evidence Rubric If the Student Did Not Do Well on the Practice Essay

Click [here](#) to hear a voice explanation of How the Evidence Rubric reveals what the student and calculates the points.

In this case, imagine that the student:

- Had to answer the question—to use an example from United States History I—on Africans who were brought to the colonies in the early part of the 1600s and instead the student wrote about *English servants* before Bacon's Rebellion. The score of 25% is usually as high as I do for this kind of error.
- Just grabbed some words exactly from the source and copied them and just swapped some other words in the author's sentences (what *The Bedford Handbook* calls "half-copy" plagiarism). The error is in the "D" Paper column so for the 100 Scale I enter the lowest grade for a "D"—a 59.5% and that percentage of 6 results in 1.50. If you want more detail on "half-copy" plagiarism, click [here](#). If you want to see the pages from *The Bedford Handbook* that show this standard, just ask.
- Followed the instruction on the maximum length and was using the correct time period in the required textbook so at least followed the directions at "D" level—again a 59.5% but that percentage of .5 points only results in a tiny number of .3.
- Did have only one grammatical error—but mechanics are worth few points (1/2 point out of 10) and a high grade on mechanics won't save you if you are not factually true.

Notice these things about the example below:

- What happened after I entered the percentages for each row (25, 59.5, 59.5, and 80) in the 100 Scale Grade column and how the Point Scale column now shows the actual points for each row and the total points.
- How I will use not just the percentages in the 100 Scale column but also a color highlight:
  - Of **yellow-orange** color as a warning sign about "D" and "F" criteria (such as **highlight** in the "D" column for the two rows getting the lowest "D" percentage—the 59.5)
  - Of **green** color as a positive sign about "A" through "C" criteria (such as **highlight** in the "B" column for the row getting an 80)
- How I will use underlining to get you to see any specifics that you want to focus on (such as the underlining for the issues in the top two rows)

- How I may add in *italic* for a specific instruction such as *Provide URLs* if I think you use something other than the required sources.

If you do not see the rubric below showing a student who did not do well, click [here](#).

Concept	"A" Paper Criteria	"B" Paper Criteria	"C" Paper Criteria	"D" Paper Criteria	"F" Paper Criteria	100 Scale Grade	Point Scale Grade
Reading for Evidence (60%)	Accurately read all of the content and analyzed to understand the unique and common traits of each part.	Accurately read all of the content and tried to analyze.	Accurately read all of the content, but did not try to analyze.	Misread, read passively, or made errors (such as cherry-picking facts or embellishing facts).	Assumed. Used an unreliable source or an <u>incorrect or incomplete part of the required source</u> .	25	1.50
Writing with Evidence (30%)	Taught your smart cousin the content for the part in the question. Provided clear examples.	Revealed some of the content for the part in the question. Provided few examples.	Summarized somewhat but did not reveal the content for the part in the question.	Wrote passively (including plagiarism or "half-copy" plagiarism). Used "" inaccurately.	Wrote opinions or assumptions. Used "" inaccurately and changed the meaning.	59.5	1.79
Following Directions for Evidence (5%)	Followed the directions exactly.	Followed the directions carefully.	Followed the directions.	Followed some directions.	Did not follow directions on the maximum length and/or source.	59.5	0.30
Mechanics (5%)	No mechanical errors.	One mechanical error.	Two or more mechanical errors.	Several mechanical errors.	Many mechanical errors.	80	0.40
Essay Point Value:	10			Total Grade			3.98

### What Do You Do to Get the Extra Credit?

You read for and wrote the Practice Essay. Now, you **are going to do some things to see yourself and your evidence as others (a boss or a prof) might see you.**

### What You Are NOT to Do – You Are NOT Rewriting and You Are NOT Editing

You are **doing things so you can see your evidence as others (a boss or a prof) might see you.** You are:

- **Not** rewriting – If you rewrite it, I care about you but I will not look at it.
- **Not** editing – If you edit it, I care about you but I will not look at it.

I will, however, gladly look with attention if you do what the rubric told you to do from the tasks below. I will compare it with my marks on your printed Practice essays. I will be able to tell if you understood the issues just by comparing your strike through and underlining.

### What Everyone Must Have Before You Start and What (and How) You Will Submit to Me When You Are Done (Sooner the Better)

1. Your required textbook (If you don't know its title and authors, click [here](#).)
2. A printed copy that you can mark as you work and later a digital copy of both:
  - a. The question/topic Blackboard asked you
  - b. The answer you entered in Blackboard

If you don't know how to do this, here are the basic steps: click on Quizzes & Exams, click on your submitted Practice Essay, and follow the prompts to choose to see what you submitted (usually clicking on OK in the right corner). Then copy and paste the question and your answer into a file. If you need more help, just ask.

3. A print of the rubric
4. Access to a word processor where you can:

- a. Strike through (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)
- b. Underline (Underline looks like this.)

The ~~strike through~~ and the underline are about all you need. You can do your ~~strike through~~ and your underlining in a word processing program that you know how to use and then—when you are done—you click on my email when I sent you the rubric, click Reply, and copy and paste your file into the Blackboard message. I will then get back to you and tell you if we must talk more or I think you are safe as is. As said in several places,

**Alternative if you don't have access to a word processor:** Blackboard's message tool lets you do both ~~strike through~~ and underlining, but it does not let you save a draft so it is very inconvenient.

**Tip for Your Brain Power in Doing These Actions**

Put your book and what you wrote side by side so you can compare them easily. I have found touching the words on each one very helpful in making myself observe carefully. If you are left handed, you may want to reverse the pattern;

- With the textbook on the left
- What you wrote on the right.

The source turned to the exact page you were using for the content	t
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The topic displayed in Blackboard
What you wrote for your Practice Essay

**How to You Know What to Do?**

FIRST, you look at the rubric and see what I underlined on it.

SECOND, you scroll below. You stop if the action matches what is on your rubric.

***What Are Your Comparing for Actions 1 through 3 (You compare your work and what you ACTUALLY were looking at when you wrote)***

With these comparisons, you put the **pages you actually used** as content side by side with what you wrote:

- With the textbook on the left
- What you wrote on the right.

The pages you were <b>actually</b> using from the textbook	or—if you used a URL—a print of that
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The topic displayed in Blackboard
What you wrote for your Practice Essay

1. **If your rubric shows either of these words underlined Wrote passively (including plagiarism or “half-copy” plagiarism)**

**Where is this on your rubric?** Writing with Evidence row; then column for the “D” grade

**Background:** If you want to know what “half-copy” plagiarism is, click [here](#). If you want to talk with me about the pages from *The Bedford Handbook* on this, just ask.

**What you must do:** If your rubric is marked with any of the above, underline in **your** paper **every** word and **every part of a word** that you used from the book. (Underline looks like this.)

Example of using part of a word::  
If the author wrote the word *demonstrating* and if you wrote demonstrated, then you underline demonstrated

2. **If your rubric asks you to *Provide the URL(s)***

**Where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade

**What you must do:** If you used something else than the required textbook, then tell me **now** and there is no negative consequence.

In the digital file and below your copy of your essay topic/question and your answer provide this for each website you used (except ones in the course):

- The exact URL that will take me to where you were
- Immediately y below that, any content you used from that page.

**What you must do:** If you did “half-copy” plagiarism using the words from a website, you also **must** do what is # 1 with those words.

If you did this with several websites (and there are some of you in that category), contact me for a fairly easy way to show the difference in the underlining with different sources.

3. **If your rubric shows underlined these words Used "" inaccurately or Used "" inaccurately and changed the meaning.**

**Where are they on your rubric?** Writing with Evidence row; then column for the “D” and the “F” grade

**What you must do:** If you have this marked, then contact me and we will talk face to face or by phone about what you need to do.

I will provide in the link on Tips for Reading for and Writing with Evidence a way to be accurate with quotations and not have to learn all of the rules for showing changes to quotations.

**What Are Your Comparing for Actions 4 through 10 (You compare your work and what you *SHOULD* have been reading in the textbook)**

For the Actions 4 Through 10, you must compare what you **should** have been reading with what you wrote.

The pages you <b>should</b> have been using from textbook	The topic displayed in Blackboard  What you wrote for your Practice Essay
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The table below tells you what you required to read for each essay question/topic. This requirement for reading was available for you from the beginning of the term in the [link for the Practice Essay](#).

Possible Topics for the Practice Essay	Required Reading for the Question (Chapter and Heading)
Servitude in English Colonies in South – <i>Early 1600s</i> (What varied things	Chapter 2: “Africans in Early Virginia.” For the meaning of the word <i>servant</i> , see its use in Chapter 2: “Tobacco

happened to Africans sold in early Virginia)	Boom.”
Slavery in English Colonies in South – Late 1600s	Chapter 3: “Systems of Slavery in North America.” (Focus on the content at the beginning of this section. Also, do not read about slavery outside of the South.)
Indenture– Pre-1676 in South ( <i>Before Bacon’s Rebellion</i> ) <b>Tip:</b> Stop reading “The War in the Chesapeake” about 1670. Note: In the textbook, the phrase used for indentured servants in some locations is <i>English servants</i> .	Chapter 2: “Tobacco Boom” and “The Colony Expands” (See <i>English servants</i> .) Chapter 3: “War in the Chesapeake”

4. **If your rubric shows underlined these words incomplete part of the required source Where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade

With the Practice Essay, some students whose topic was Indenture– Pre-1676 in South (*Before Bacon’s Rebellion*) only read the first reading, the “Tobacco Boom” in Chapter 2.

**What you must do:** If you did this or something similar, list beneath your copy of your essay the reading you did and the ones you should have done.

How this issue applies to Unit essay exams: You must read everything necessary to answer an essay topic. In this course, I provide a link to all possible essay topics and give tips on where to locate information in the textbook on those topics if you cannot readily find the information using the index.

- If you have tips on where to read, use them.
- If you can’t find where to read and there are no tips, ask for help.

5. **If your rubric shows underlined these words an incorrect or incomplete part of the required source **Caution** AND you did NOT use the correct readings for each question listed above Where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade

Look at what you wrote for the topic. Compare your facts in your answer to the readings listed above.

**What you must do:** Strike through all facts in your essay that are not from the readings listed above. (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)

6. **If your rubric shows underlined these words an incorrect or incomplete part of the required source **Caution** AND you used the correct readings listed above Where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade

**Background:** Everything on a page may not be about the topic you are to cover. You were not asked to do a summary of the book, but deal with the topic.

To use an analogy that seemed to help one student who seemed puzzled by why she could not cover Barbados in a topic on Africans in Early Virginia: “if your boss asked you to find out what was wrong with the plant in *Port Lavaca*, your boss would think you were not paying attention if you wrote your report on *Dallas*.”

Look at what you wrote for the topic. Look at the examples below to help you understand.

**What you must do:** Strike through all facts in your essay that are not applicable to your topic. (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)

Possible Topics for the Practice Essay	Examples of Facts to Strike Through That Are on the Pages But Are Not Applicable to the Topic
Servitude in English Colonies in <b>South – Early 1600s</b> (What varied things happened to <b>Africans</b> sold in early <b>Virginia</b> )	White indentured servants in Virginia Africans in Barbados or the West Indies Africans involved in sugar production The “harsh slave regime” in Barbados The Africans being more numerous than the whites in Barbados and after

	1660
Slavery in English Colonies in South – Late 1600s	Slavery in colonies other than the South Events after 1699
Indenture– Pre-1676 in South ( <i>Before Bacon’s Rebellion</i> ) <b>Tip:</b> Stop reading “The War in the Chesapeake” about 1670. Note: In the textbook, the phrase used for indentured servants in some locations is <i>English servants</i> .	African servants Details about how Virginia became a “boom town” Details about the planters who got land immediately—They are not indentured servants. The establishment of the House of Burgesses—Indentured servants do not vote. The Indian struggle in New England The details of the Indian struggle in Virginia

7. **If your rubric shows underlined these words embellishing facts where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “D” grade

**Background:** If you want to know what *embellishing* facts means, click here:

**What you must do:** Look at the examples below to help you understand. Strike through all facts in your essay that are not clearly and obviously supported in the source. (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)

Category	Examples of What You Must Not Include in Your Essays
Assertions of motivation	If our source does not say that indentured servants felt honored to do something or does not say the reason for a group’s action, then you do not say it.
Feelings	Your feelings about groups and individuals in the past are not evidence about what they felt.  Your feelings about what you would do in a specific circumstance are not evidence about what they did.
Prepositions before dates	<i>By</i> the 1660s is not the same as <i>in</i> the 1660s
Quantities as numbers and terms	If the source talks about an increase but also provides specific numbers showing the limitations to the growth, do not dramatize the increase when the reality of the numbers is that it was 4% of the population.
Quantities as terms	Be careful of words like <i>most</i> or <i>more</i> or <i>all</i> or <i>few</i> or any quantities. You do not have to write about them, but—if you do write about them—you cannot change them to make a more interesting story.

8. **If your rubric shows underlined these words cherry-picking facts Where is this on your rubric?** Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “D” grade.

**Background:** If you want to know what *cherry-picking* facts means, click [here](#):

**What you must do:** Look at the definition above to help you understand. If you give examples of what is happening, those examples must be representative. If something is atypical, you must identify it that way. Strike through all facts in your essay that are not clearly and obviously supported in the source and representative of what occurred. (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)

9. **If your rubric shows underlined these words Assumed or Wrote opinions or assumptions Where are they on your rubric? Two places:**  
 - Reading for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade.  
 - Writing with Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade

**Background:** If you want to know what assumed, assumption, and opinions means, click [here](#). They are the opposite of facts and evidence.



**What you must do:** Look at the definition above to help you understand. If you state something in your essays for this course, you must be able to prove it (facts and evidence) using the textbook and examining the section of the book specified for essays. If you cannot prove it, then you must strike it out. It does not count for points. (Strike through looks like ~~this~~.)

**10. If your rubric shows underlined these words maximum length or source**

**Where are they on your rubric?** Following Directions for Evidence row; then column for the “F” grade.

The words in your essays can be simple, with the goal that you teach your smart cousin. There are, however, specific directions for some essays that you must follow and there are two basics in the directions that you must do.

**What you must do:**

The directions for evidence that always exist are maximum length for each essay is 175 words.

They must be based on evidence provided in the source (the textbook). For detail, click [here](#) for the first item in the Evidence Checklist.

**If You Have a Question** – The section “How to Know What You Are to Do?” provides direct links to parts of this information that may help you. You may also find the questions useful in general.

**If You Are Really Puzzled about Plagiarism or “Half-copy” Plagiarism Being Marked**

Students are usually puzzled about the plagiarism or “half-plagiarism” marking because they lack some basic information. Here are the basics.

1. The submission of a paper with words from an author **without** quotation marks can be the **professor's evidence** that you plagiarized. Some professors may not notice, but some may call it plagiarism. Do **not** assume that past responses by professors guarantee what future professors will want (and no boss ever will pay people—not well anyway—to copy words from one place to another).
2. If you do this, some professors may label your work as “half-copy” plagiarism (term from *The Bedford Handbook*, page 692) if you:
  - Either copy an author’s phrases without quotation marks (“”)
  - Or use the **author’s sentence structure and just swap a few words** with what you think are synonyms
3. **Caution:** If you think saying the name of the source means you can copy another’s words without quotations marks, look at this table.

If you use a fact in the author’s words, citation is **not** enough; you must **also** use quotation marks. What are the rules for citation and use of quotation marks? The rules vary depending upon whether you are writing:

- A fact from the source in your own words
- A fact in the author’s words (you are quoting):

What Kind of Fact Are You Using	Do You Need Citation (Page # etc.)?	Do You Need Quotation Marks (“”)?
A fact in <b>your own</b> words	Yes—although I do <b>not</b> require that in the Blackboard’s tiny box for essays or in an essay an on-campus student writes in class.	No
A fact in the <b>author’s</b> words	Yes	Yes <b>&lt;Notice this.</b>

Specifics about **this** course:

- I do not require citations when you use facts in an essay that you do in the Blackboard’s tiny box for essays, but there are [conditions](#).

- On the other hand, **I do require quotation marks if you use the author's words**. In this course, you may **not** plagiarize or “half-copy” plagiarize. You may however quote, but you have to use the rules for quoting. If you want more tips, check the preventions link below. If you have questions, please ask.

### If You Are Confused about What Words in the Author's Textbook Require Quotation Marks in Your Writing

If you are confused about when to use quotation marks, these examples may help you.

What the Author Wrote	What Words You Want to Write	Do You Need Quotation Marks (“”)? and Why
the Mississippi River	the Mississippi River	No – Proper nouns belong to all of us.
the green, roaring river	the river	No – Common nouns belong to all of us.
the green, roaring Mississippi River	the roaring Mississippi River	Yes <b>&lt;Notice this&gt;</b> . – These are the author's unique string of words so you identify them as <b>not</b> your creation with “”: Trade was harder because of the “roaring Mississippi River.”
	roaring	Yes <b>&lt;Notice this&gt;</b> . – This is the author's labeling of a condition and it is easier to be clear by using the author's word with “”. The author explained that the “roaring” river made trade more difficult.

### If You Are Confused by the Words Cherry-Picking Facts?

Merriam- Webster Online (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>) defines *cherry pick*:

to select as being the best or most desirable; *also* : to select the best or most desirable from

It is easier to see its meaning with facts by looking at its related words.

Synonyms

**CHERRY-PICK, CULL, ... HANDPICK, ... PICK, PREFER, SELECT, SINGLE (OUT)...**

Related Words

**PRESELECT; APPOINT, ... FIX, MARK, NOMINATE, SET, TAB, TAP; ACCEPT, ADOPT, EMBRACE, ESPOUSE ...**

Basic Rule: Your credibility will frequently be tied to your examples. If you select examples that are atypical or that ignore the contradictions covered in the section you are using, you will lose that precious credibility

### If You Are Confused by the Words Embellishing Facts?

Merriam- Webster Online (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>) defines embellish:

to make beautiful with ornamentation : **DECORATE** <a book *embellished* with illustrations>

to heighten the attractiveness of by adding decorative or fanciful details : **ENHANCE** <*embellished* our account of the trip>

You can make-up “fanciful details” about your “account of a trip” but **not** to history. If the author of the required source (the textbook) does not give details, then you can't—and you don't need to.

Among the synonyms for embellish are some ugly words if you are striving to figure things out honorably;  
... **EMBROIDER, EXAGGERATE, HYPERBOLIZE, MAGNIFY, PAD, STRETCH**

Basic rule: Verify what you say by checking the source, or don't say it.

### If You Are Confused by the Words Assume, Assumption, and Opinion?

Merriam- Webster Online (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>) defines *assume* and *assumption and opinion*:

Assume: to think that something is true or probably true without knowing that it is true

Assumption: something that is believed to be true or probably true but that is not known to be true : something that is assumed

Opinion: a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something : what someone thinks about a particular thing

Now look at the definitions for fact and evidence. What you ought to notice is that there are not a lot of facts and evidence in assumptions or opinions.

Fact: something that truly exists or happens : something that has actual existence  
: a true piece of information

evidence: something which shows that something else exists or is true

: a visible sign of something

: material that is presented to a court of law to help find the truth about something

Basic rule: Verify what you say by checking the source, or don't say it.

### What Is the Goal for Writing in This Course? – Think about it as teaching some part of history to your smart cousin.

With something that people talk about in many ways, sometimes it helps to state what is **not** the goal. With writing in this course, you:

- Are **not** summarizing or **not** paraphrasing the textbook.
- Do **not** need to repeat every fact or word in the textbook.
- Are **not** showing your personal writing style while stating your feelings or your opinions.

Instead, in **this** course, the goal of all writing assignments is for you to do activities that help you learn the history of our nation. **One of the most powerful ways to learn something is to try to teach it.**

You will succeed in these assignments if you do these things:

- If you read carefully and work to understand what happened and ask if you need help.
- If you figure out what essential facts that you would teach your cousin.
- If you figure how you could organize those facts as simply and as accurately as you can.
- If you write in a common sense way as though you are teaching your cousin history that he or she needs to understand.

### What Is the Required Textbook? – Required When You Write about History and Used When I Grade

This textbook is required. You use it as your only source of facts when you write; I use it when I grade your evidence. Edward Ayers, Lewis Gould, David Oshinsky, and Jean Soderlund. *American Passages: A History of the United States*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. The ISBN for the current 4th edition in paperback is ISBN: 9780547166469. (If you need tips on buying or borrowing a cheap book, click on the FAQs in this learning module.)

**Caution:** You **cannot** use the **BRIEF**, 4<sup>th</sup> edition which has **2 fewer chapters** than the 32 chapters in the other 4<sup>th</sup> editions and all prior editions of this book.

### How Does Your Instructor Grade Your Writing?

Because the goal of writing is to help you learn our nation's history and the priority is for you to be accurate, I grade your writing by comparing what you wrote side by side with the facts in the textbook. With essays submitted, I use a method that lets me quickly identify all of the submissions where the students wrote on the same question. It is—as is obvious—a slow method, but it works.

1. I download those submissions, print them, and place them side by side (just as I recommend for you above).

- On the left, the textbook opened to the probable section or sections students should have used.

- On the right, a stack of all the submissions of students' papers on **that** question.

I also have a stack of rubrics to mark and a matrix for recording the class results.

In other words. I make it possible to grade you accurately and very fast.

The source turned to the exact page the student <b>should</b> have used or the content	t
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What you wrote for your Practice Essay
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Grid page (from Banner) that I uses as a matrix to chart which question you had and who misread, "half-copied" and so on.
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2. I use the Evidence Rubric for feedback (shown above) and grade each student's submissions one by one.
3. If there are multiple possible questions, I then repeat the steps above with the next question.

With the two essays for the Unit exams, I grade one of the questions using the method above. Sometimes I toss a coin or something like that to be sure I am not grading the same topic number each time. Unless I find problems such as factual errors in that first essay I grade, I grade the other one **without** the textbook side by side with your paper—a quicker method.

### What Is the Evidence Checklist?

The Evidence Checklist is the other side of the Rubric. Think of it as a two-sided coin. I use the Evidence Rubric to grade with. You can use the Evidence Checklist to help yourself be stronger. Both rely on common *standards* (accepted rules or models) for academics and for jobs that depend on evidence:

- The word *evidence* emphasizes that you must have proof for what you say—some fact from our approved source that anyone using that source can see for himself or herself.
- The word *checklist* means a list of steps or things necessary for success (such as a pilot's checklist for takeoff).

Each checklist number:

- Begins with an informal statement of a common standard that applies to academics and to jobs
- Below that are our specific requirements, identified with the underlined phrase In this course.

I can also offer additional tips for how to prevent problems (including with Checklist # 3). Just ask and I will provide preventions for these items.

1. For your source of facts, you use <b>only</b> sources your professor (or boss) accepts as reliable.  <u>In this course</u> , the <b>only</b> sources are the textbook chosen by the History Department and the sources provided at our Course Website. Do <b>not</b> use Internet websites, another textbook, or any other source—including your own memory.
2. You must follow common standards to reveal to your reader who created the words and/or found the facts you are using in your writing. This is a requirement in courses and in some jobs.  <u>In this course</u> , you may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either write facts in your own words</li> <li>• Or you may use exact sentences or phrases from the textbook placed within quotation marks according to the specific rules for quotation marks (""") to reveal ownership that are covered in <i>The Bedford Handbook</i></li> </ul> <u>In this course</u> , you may <b>not</b> copy an author's phrases without quotation marks. You also may <b>not</b> replace a few words in an author's sentence. Both are what <i>The Bedford Handbook</i> calls "half-copy" plagiarism (page 692).
3. You must follow common standards to reveal any changes you made to the author's words. This may not be just a punctuation error. You may be misleading your reader about the evidence.  <u>In this course</u> , if you use another's words, you must be sure either not to change them or—if you change them—to

	follow the specific rules in <i>The Bedford Handbook</i> to reveal those changes to the reader.
4.	<p>You must use reliable sources to verify what you write. (To <i>verify</i> means you use a reliable source to confirm the accuracy of anything you write.)</p> <p><u>In this course</u>, if you cannot verify the fact, do <b>not</b> write it and do <b>not</b> assume that the source agrees with you. If you are certain something is true and you cannot find it clearly in our sources, ask me for help.</p> <p><u>In this course</u>, you also must select facts to reveal the facts accurately. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a question is about something specific (such as a time, type of person, or region), verify that the source is about that specific thing.</li> <li>• If the source covers facts about two or more sides or positions or actions from two or more groups or individuals, do not include only one side as though the other did not occur.</li> </ul>
5.	<p>With most written work for professors (or bosses), if asked, you must be able to state exactly <i>where</i> (a <b>specific</b> page) in the source that <b>each</b> fact came from—whether you wrote the words or the author did. With many college assignments, you must provide citations and use a specific standard (such as <i>MLA</i>, <i>APA</i>, or the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>).</p> <p><u>In this course with most written assignments</u>, you do <b>not</b> need to provide citations (the specific page number from our textbook) unless I cannot recognize where the fact came from.</p> <p><b>If I cannot recognize where the fact came from</b>, then you must show me the location on the page. It cannot be a vague statement: if a reasonable person using a reliable dictionary and reading the entire passage would not agree that you have evidence for what you say, then neither will I.</p> <p><b>If you ask to do the more challenging alternative assignment instead of the essays for Unit 2</b>, then you must cite according to the instructions.</p>

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