

Paragraph Evaluation Key (Steven Engler)

Numbers in circles are comments not marks. Not all strengths and weaknesses are noted. There is no direct correlation between number (or ticks) and your mark. Even-numbered comments highlight strengths, odd-numbered ones issues to work on. Issues of grammar, syntax, etc. affect your grade only if they lead to lack of clarity. (Comments 23 & 27 don't affect your grade).

1. Work on topic sentence (t.s.). (Give clearer m.p. for the paragraph (¶)here)
2. Good t.s. (Clearly stated m.p. for the ¶.)
3. The t.s. is too general or vague.
4. This sentence would make a better t.s. than the one you have.
5. The t.s. states one point on the topic rather than a m.p. (In that sense, it is not really a topic sentence; it just launches into the topic, not setting it up.)
6. On track to a good clear t.s.
7. This point off track, not directly relevant to the topic of the ¶ (this is usually a matter of shifting to a new topic in the middle of the ¶ that is not indicated by the t.s.).
8. ¶ stays well focused on the topic *as expressed in the t.s.*
9. Vague: work on wording or focus sentence. (Overly general point; vague or unclear word choice; point needs to be made explicit; term should be defined)
10. Well-focused; well-put. / Very clear sentence.
11. This point should be tied in more explicitly to the t.s. Not clear how it relates.
12. Good work linking point explicitly to the t.s. Contributes clearly to the focus of the ¶.
13. Missing key points; important parts of a solid answer are left out.
14. Covers all the key points clearly in a manner that shows how they relate to the t.s.
15. Draw out the religious significance of this point more (e.g., how is it related to a basic idea? What does it mean in the context of this passage/example?) Use example more effectively. (Draw out its significance, especially in terms of t.s.)
16. Good work stating religious significance, i.e., using details that reflect course contents in a way that helps make your point clear.
17. This material repeats what you said above, probably a reason to reorganize.
18. Excellent progression of points, with each sentence contributing a distinct point
19. Example(s) needed to support/illustrate central points and key terms
20. Good work supporting central points and key terms with specific examples.
21. Grammar/syntax/word choice get(s) in the way of understanding this point.
22. Good work offering a clear definition or example of a key term.
23. No need for concluding sentence to “wrap up” the ¶.
25. This point is wrong, misinterprets the material, seems off or is under-supported.
27. This sentence has grammatical problems (incomplete, run-on, etc.).
29. At this point you seem to express an insider view rather than the “outsider,” “neutral,” comparative view of Religious Studies.
31. Don't just list: give a clear framing point in the t.s. that serves to keep your ¶ clearly organized; *develop* that t.s., not just listing points that happen to seem relevant.
33. Avoid making points with questions; *make* the point; don't hint at it.
35. Avoid structuring the ¶ as a narrative: make the m.p. in the t.s. then develop it.

Abbreviations: ¶ – paragraph; t.s. – topic sentence; m.p. – main point/issue