Example of an Analysis of History Skills Required for an Argumentative Essay (from Walvoord and Anderson's *Effective Grading*):
Note: The following list of traits represents the first step toward developing a PTA rubric. This primary trait analysis can be used to develop a course plan (see Exhibit 4.3 from Walvoord and Anderson's book) and to develop a grading scale (see Exhibit 5.5).

1. Reading accurately (including an accurate sense of chronological narrative).

   Students must be able to report accurately on what they have read. They must know, for example, that events in 1645 could not have caused events in 1641.

2. Realizing that published works have authors.

   This includes paying attention to authors' personalities, possible biases, and attempts to organize material for the reader. Students should know who wrote their textbooks and be aware of the major section and chapter headings in them.

3. Perceiving and using standard analytical categories.

   These include political, social, economic, religious, and cultural factors often cited in explaining past events.

4. Perceiving historical theses.

   Students must be able to see that historians *argue* about the past. They debate, for example, whether or not absolutism was beneficial to the majority of the French subjects of Louis XIV.

5. Using written sources as evidence.

   Facts only become *evidence* when brought forward in relation to a thesis. Both primary sources (contemporary eyewitness) and secondary sources may be used to state or defend a historical thesis.

6. Stating and defending a historical thesis.

   Accurate and specific examples and evidence are key to this: secondary-source authors may be used as models. This can be done in two stages:

   1) Defending a thesis selected by the instructor
   2) Choosing one's own thesis

7. Defending a historical thesis against counterarguments.

   Agreeing with one secondary-source author is not enough; students need to say why they rejected carefully argued opposing views. Again, accurate and specific examples and evidence are key.