**Sample topic sentence outline you students assigned me in class. Hover above the highlighted sentences to see my comments—or click on the comments on the right side of the page (depending on which version of Word you are using).**

**Question:** What made the 2021 Atlanta Braves so great?

**Topic sentence 1:** One reason the 2021 Braves were great was the crucial roster additions before the trade deadline.

**Topic sentence 2:** The Braves were great, too, because they never, ever gave up—they always believed in themselves. When the Braves suffered injuries, including to their best pitcher, Mike Soroka, and the most exciting player in baseball, Ronald Acuna, Jr., fans and sportswriters alike figured the season was lost. The team did not have a winning record until August, and hardly anyone thought then they would make the postseason. But to the surprise of many, the Braves started winning in the last two months of the season and went on to win the World Series. From their manager on down to the bench players, they always believed that they were good—and they were! One example of their believing in themselves came in an improbable 9-game road winning streak August 13th through the 22nd (mlb.com). In September they won seven of nine games in a west coast road trip that no one but true believers could have thought possible—except, of course, manager Brian Snitker and the Braves on the roster (mlb.com). Perhaps the best example of the Braves not giving up on themselves is the way they responded to the loss of Acuna. He was heading for an MVP award and was crucial to the offensive production, but seemingly every one on the Braves roster picked up the team in different games to fill his absence. As *Atlanta Journal Constitution* writer Gabriel Burn puts it, “This team’s one-of-a-kind story will be referenced across generations with the simplest yet most invaluable lesson: Never give up” (p. 8). Without question, a key factor in the Braves’ special greatness this year was their determination *never* to give up, to believe in themselves even in long stretches of adversity.

**Topic sentence 3:** As with every great team, the 2021 Braves had exceptionally strong pitching, both starting and in the bullpen.

**Thesis:** The 2021 Braves were so great because of the deadline trade acquisitions, they never gave up, and they had exceptionally strong pitching.