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Cognitive ability may seem like an obvious factor related to academic success. Cognitive ability is usually understood in terms of previous academic performance and/or scores on various aptitude tests (Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, & Elliot, 2002). Past studies have suggested that cognitive ability is indeed a major factor in predicting academic performance. For example, McKenzie and Schwiitzer (2001) claimed that upon entry to university, students with higher entry scores also tended to achieve higher academic grades. Similarly, a study by Burton and Dowling (2005) found that previous academic performance was a significant predictor of first year university performance. However, these findings have been debated, with other studies suggesting that this measure of success (in terms of grade point average or student attrition) has been overstated because some students who achieve high scores on aptitude tests perform badly or leave university, whilst others who do not score well are very successful (Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004, Ransdell, 2001). This suggests that, while important, cognitive ability alone is not a major factor in achieving academic success.

**GOLDEN RULE 3**

STATE YOUR TOPIC ARGUMENT AND JUSTIFY IT WITH EVIDENCE

These sentences describe what is being argued in relation to the topic of the paragraph. Here, it is being argued that cognitive ability predicts academic performance. Research evidence from scholarly literature is then presented to justify or back up this argument.



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