

Peer Review: Questions for Authors

Please answer the following questions and **PROVIDE TWO COPIES (one for the copy of your paper that you submit for peer review and one to turn in with the essay that you provide for me):**

1. What are you trying to say? What is your thesis (or primary claim)?
2. Which parts of your paper are the most effective?
3. Which parts of your paper need more work?
4. To what do you want your reviewers to pay the most attention? What types of comments would you most welcome?

Peer Review: Questions for Reviewers

Once you complete this part of the assignment, for the paper that you review, print one copy for the author of each essay that you reviewed and **MAKE AN EXTRA COPY OF YOUR REVIEW FOR ME.** You may print extra copies, or, if your reviews are handwritten, make photocopies before giving them to the authors. **For each student paper that you review, do the following:**

1. **Read the note from the author and the paper thoroughly without making any comments.**
2. Answer the following questions:
 - a. **What seems to be the main point of the paper?** Is it clear? Why or why not? Does the introduction offer a plan of development/support for the argument? If so, is the plan of development clear, and does the paper go on to follow that plan? Has the author managed to grab your attention? Has he or she provided enough background information on his or her topic? Is the introduction effective? Why or why not?
 - b. **What is the author's position on or approach to this topic?** Is the position or approach arguable? Does it leave room for alternative opinions or disagreement? Is his or her position well supported?
 - c. **How many sub-topics can you identify to support the author's thesis? Restate each sub-topic in your own words.** Is the relationship between the sub-topics clear? Why or why not?
 - d. **For each sub-topic, are there sufficient details or examples to support it?** If so, which details are most effective? If not, which areas seem inadequately supported? Does the author use varied methods of development throughout the essay? Do you have any specific recommendations for the author?
 - e. **Does the essay have both logical and personal appeal?** For example, can you find evidence of both facts or statistics that appeal to the audience's desire for logical proof along with more detailed examples or illustrations that appeal to the audience's sense of human interest? What makes this essay most credible? What could make it more credible?
 - f. **Is the paper well organized?** If so, how so? If not, what recommendations do you have for the author about reorganizing or rearranging his or her ideas?
 - g. Feel free to add **any other general comments or words of encouragement** for the author, but be sure to **look over my "additional considerations" on the next page** before you do.

Please see "additional considerations" for peer review on page two.

Some additional considerations:

- 1. Do not comment specifically on grammar.** This exercise is meant specifically to address the clarity of ideas, the adequacy of support, and the effectiveness of organization. If there's a recurring issue that is very apparent to you (say, fragments, run-ons, etc.), you might mention it in passing, but don't nit-pick.
- 2. Do not use peer review as a forum for agreement or disagreement with the issue presented in the paper.** Your task is not to evaluate the morality or validity of the issues presented in the papers that you review, rather it is to evaluate the quality of the paper itself—how well it makes its point, how well supported its ideas are, and how well organized it is.
- 3. Take your time and respond constructively** to the papers that you review, pointing out both strengths and weaknesses in the paper. Give the kind of review that you would find useful for your own paper.
- 4. It is often the case that some students will provide much more conscientious reviews for their peers than the reviews that they will receive in return.** This is simply a fact of life. Some students work harder than others. Please do the best job that you can for your classmates and realize that you will be graded accordingly. Also, understand that the process of reviewing someone else's essay is just as valuable as (if not more valuable than) the process of being reviewed. Even if your reviewers put little effort into reviewing your essay, I hope you can take some comfort in the knowledge that you have learned more from the process than they have and that you will still receive feedback from the instructor.

Happy reviewing!