

## Peer Review Worksheet #1

**Directions:** Pair up with one other person in your group and switch computers with them, then read and respond to their paper following this guide.

**To Remember:** Peer reviewing is a beneficial practice which gives you models of both bad writing that you will want to avoid and good writing that you will want to emulate. Peer reviewing helps you learn how to read the way a sympathetic listener listens. Many hesitate to give honest feedback, preferring “Looks great!” to any kind of actual helpful evaluation. When you do give feedback, offer suggestions and comments that are nonjudgmental but which help the writer see how an audience reacts to the paper (example: “I don’t understand what you meant here.”) Please try to get over your hesitation in order to make this session worthwhile for both you and the writer.

### Your job as a reviewer...

#### IS:

- To make suggestions and comments
- To look at the overall argument and main points
- To tactfully and respectfully explain what doesn’t work in their paper
- To honestly react and clearly explain how you feel about their paper

#### IS NOT:

- To edit or make changes
- To focus on spelling or comma placement (unless it inhibits the reading of the paper)
- To make them feel their paper sucks
- To offer “Good Job!” as your only comment

### *Read and respond to your peer’s essay following these steps:*

1. Highlight the thesis in blue. (Or if you prefer you can change the font color instead of highlighting as illustrated here.) Is the thesis clear? If not, insert a comment explaining what you do not understand about the thesis or wish you could hear more about.
2. Highlight the topic sentences in orange. Ask yourself whether the topic sentences relate back clearly to the thesis. If not, insert a comment explaining why the point of the paragraph does not seem to be clearly related to the thesis. Remember that the topic sentence is not necessarily the first sentence of a paragraph.
3. Make helpful suggestions. Insert comments regarding the following:
  - a. The introduction. Does it have an effective hook to interest the reader?
  - b. Identify the best part of the paper by inserting a comment that says [BEST:] and then explaining why you liked it.

- c. Identify the most confusing or objectionable part of the paper—the part you would most like to see deleted or revised. Insert a comment that says [LIKE LEAST:] and explain why you did not like that part of the paper.
  - d. Insert additional comments if you feel they are needed to help the writer strengthen the paper. Sometimes it's helpful to indicate to the writer what you wish you could hear more about.
  - e. The conclusion. Does it have a solid sense of resolution or a clincher?
4. Meet with your peer and go through their paper with them, asking them questions and explaining your comments. Make sure they understand what you mean in your comments.
  5. For homework, write a summary reflection of one or two paragraphs discussing your overall comments about your peer's paper. Include the following:
    - a. Your overall evaluation of your peer's paper, summarizing briefly what suggestions you made
    - b. An explanation of what you learned about your own writing or about essay writing in general from reading and evaluating your peer's paper.

Post this reflection on your blog by the beginning of the next class meeting.