

Table of Contents

A. How can we earn tokens?	1
B. How can we improve Perusall comments?	1
C. What are some examples of UR's awesome services?	2

A. How can we earn tokens?

1. Meeting with me for office hours at least ONCE in the first three weeks of class → can earn ONE token this way
2. Attend a Biology (Monday 12-1 pm) or BMB seminar (Tuesday 12-1 pm) in Gottwald Auditorium (other talks may be approved throughout semester, can request approval for a talk if you give at least 48 hour pre-notice, so talk opportunity can be communicated to your classmates) → can earn **up to TWO** tokens this way, token is earned by submitting a short paragraph in a 1:1 message to me describing the talk, what was most impactful to you, and what way(s) it connected to our course.
 - o Biology seminar series:
<https://biology.richmond.edu/major-minor/seminar-series.html>
3. Make sure to read through my feedback on returned assignments. Every once in a blue moon, there's an opportunity to earn a token.
4. Use of the Writing Center for a paper in my class or the Speech Center for our final group presentation each will warrant one token.
5. Do the Kaiju analysis! In Week 4R, I introduced one analysis using the oral2 and musk2 sequencing reads we examined in lab on Weeks 2 and 3. It's an interesting analysis that I wrote up as part of the first NGS lab (Week 2 lab), but I quickly discovered when I first taught the course that there was no time to make it an official lab. If you're interested in trying it out, you can earn one token for completing the associated worksheet. If you re-run the analysis, note that it can take a while - for me it took about 24 hours before I was emailed the results.
 - o [Kaiju protocol](#)
 - o [Kaiju worksheet](#)
6. Chat with a GEP Virtual TA. Access to [their calendar \(in Central Time\) and bios are available here](#). Find a TA at a time that works for you, and sign on through the Zoom link provided below. Introduce yourself to the TA, and say you're working with me on the Pathways Project in a first-year Bio class. Ask your content/skill questions, or if you don't have any, maybe ask them about their experience with the GEP. TAs should be able to help you with questions on the central dogma, using BLAST, using the Genome Browser, and understanding RNA-Seq data/exon junctions.
 - o [Zoom link to the GEP Virtual TA Room](#)
 - o Can get 1 token for first visit, and a 2nd token if you do 3 visits. No more tokens thereafter, though you can certainly visit them as often as you want.
 - o To receive the token, ask the TA to email me at myang@richmond.edu to confirm the meeting, and after the meeting, write me a Perusall message letting me know what you learned and whether it was a helpful (or not helpful) experience.

7. If I announce additional opportunities, I will add them here and let you know through in-class and Perusall announcements.

B. How can we improve Perusall comments?

Generally, I will ask for a minimum of 1-2 comments. Perusall scores all your comments (out of 3 pts) and uses the highest scoring comments. Generally, comments that don't regurgitate what is said in the text, tries to build up an idea, and demonstrates some deeper thinking tend to satisfy the 2.5+ requirement. I always encourage including 1-2 more comments than the minimum, both because the class collectively gets more out of the reading and you have a bit more buffer. Note that five low quality comments won't get you credit, whereas 1-2 high quality comments will. Most reading assignments will require two high quality comments.

If you're not sure what to say, some possible response types are provided below, adapted from the following link: ["Effectively Responding to a Peer's Post"](#):

- Share your experience reading the article and state how it relates to the course material or to the initial post.
- Agree or disagree with the reading and/or post and explain why you agree or disagree.
- Research something in the reading in more detail on your own, and connect your findings to the reading, making sure to link/cite your research.
- Expand on a classmate's post to demonstrate that you understand the topic.
- Reply to a question posed by one of your classmates and support your statements with sources from the text (or elsewhere! Formal citation not necessary, but provide a link).
- Ask a probing question or an explanation of a point made in the article or post.
- Share an insight or something you learned from reading your peer's posting or the article, and connect to a previous course reading.
- Explain how someone's post helped you understand the material or made you rethink your own views.
- Offer an opinion and support it with examples from the text (or other references you link/cite).
- Relate information in the post or article to your assignments and/or research projects.
- Challenge a statement in a post or article. If you would not let a statement go unchallenged in a class discussion, do not let it go unchallenged online.
- Tie ideas together: Discuss how comments other students made relate to your peer's post.
- Make sure you cite your sources for all references and for any other ideas that are not your own.

Note also that engaging with your classmates' comments is what makes Perusall so great. I encourage reading without looking at comments first, and then going through after forming your own thoughts to upvote and/or reply to some of your classmates' comments.

Generally, I tend not to reply to comments - mainly because I want to encourage you all to reply to each other and not dominate conversations. I will always read every comment, and I use

comments sometimes to start discussions in the classroom or add mini-lectures if I see high confusion.

C. What are some examples of UR's awesome services?

Below, I summarize some comments and examples related to various services provided at UR, that you all brainstormed in Week 1R's class. The details of each service can be found in the syllabus on p. 7, and I encourage visiting their websites to learn more about them.

Career Services - A place to get advice, support, and resources for the job or internship search. Your classmates brought up the following services you might want to use Career Services for:

- Get tips on making a resume, or get help reviewing and improving a resume
- Look for information and networks to help find an internship in an area of interest
- Look for information on jobs related to your major or major of interest
- Look for information on graduate school related to your major or major of interest

CAPS - A way to meet with a therapist for counseling, below are some examples your classmates brought up for why talking to a therapist might be helpful:

- High levels of stress
- Feuds with teachers or friends
- Struggling with academics or social anxieties
- Your mental health is not doing well, and you want to improve it

Boatwright Research Librarians (and Library) - UR's main library for all your research needs. Your classmates said that they are a good resource because:

- They provide help to find articles and resources to start your research paper process.
- They can discuss different citation tools and formats with you
- Sometimes can help you brainstorm how to narrow down research topics

Disability Services - a place that helps students with disabilities receive the same opportunities and access to campus resources. Your classmates shared some reasons you might want to visit:

- You have a learning disability for which you would like to receive an accommodation - these help your professors work with you to develop reasonable accommodations so you have an equivalent classroom experience to your peers
- A testing center for those with testing accommodations to take exams outside of the classroom

Speech Center - A place to learn how to give effective presentations. Your classmates shared some reasons you might want to visit:

- Build confidence for public presentations
- Practice public speaking or public expression
- Tips to help with giving speeches

- Listen to a practice talk to help you improve

Academic Skills Center - A place to learn how to study effectively and find tutors. Your classmates shared that they can help you:

- Get help with managing a large workload
- Find tutors to help you learn material for a class - most intro courses have tutors!

Writing Center - A place to improve your written communications. Your classmates shared that they can help you:

- Learn how to format and write a research paper correctly
- Meet with a peer writing advisor to gain feedback on your paper, particularly checking for the organization and clarity of your writing
- Gain help with writing a paper if you're feeling stuck