

Evaluation Essay: Peer-Review Exercise*

“All other things being equal, most people are more deeply influenced by one clear, vivid personal example than by an abundance of statistical data.”

—Pratkanis and Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: The Use and Abuse of Persuasion*

- First, trade drafts with one another, and sign your classmate’s draft at the top of the first page. (Remember to swap contact info: cell phone #s or email addresses.)
- After class, first read the draft one time without stopping to mark anything. Just get a sense of the whole—what’s the overall structure, focus, architecture?
- Read the draft a 2nd time, and this time
 - underline what you think the intended Major Claim is in the introduction
 - is there more than one major claim? if so, what could be cut?
 - how accurately does the major claim predict/fit the rest of the argument?
 - underline the minor claims in each body paragraph
 - is there more than one minor claim? if so, what could be cut?
 - mark the data (circle it, use brackets, whatever) in each body paragraph
 - how tightly does the data match the claim?
 - is the data as specific as possible? (one specific story or instance, for example)
 - underline what you think the intended Major Claim is in the conclusion
 - is there more than one major claim? if so, what could be cut?
- Using the handout on transitions, read through your classmate’s draft again, this time inserting at least 5 transitions throughout the text. Number each transition so your classmate and I can quickly find your 5 suggestions.
- Are there any other organization or development issues you see?

*A note about our process: Your classmate is making a commitment to help you as thoroughly and as carefully as possible. You are undoubtedly making the same commitment to your classmate. Though we’re trading drafts with one another on Thursday, we won’t discuss the drafts till Tuesday’s class. Thus, attendance on Tuesday is critical. If you cannot be here, you must arrange to meet with your classmate outside of class to discuss his or her draft—giving him or her sufficient time to revise before the final copy is due. Your classmate, however, is under no obligation to help you if you are absent.