

# Peer Review Best Practices

We recommend that readers interested in learning more about how to implement peer review effectively in their classes consider the following sources:

1. WAC Clearinghouse. (n.d.). How Can I Get the Most Out of Peer Review?  
<https://wac.colostate.edu/repository/teaching/intro/peer/>
  - a. This webpage, targeted to instructors from all disciplines, provides guidance about how to scaffold peer review and even includes a sample peer review worksheet.
2. Kiefer, Kate. (1998). Using Student Peer Review. *The WAC Clearinghouse*.  
<https://writing.colostate.edu/teaching/guide.cfm?guideid=99>
  - a. This webpage is geared towards writing/composition teachers. It offers sample peer review worksheets that are aligned with portfolio assessment of writing.
3. Sweetland Center for Writing. (n.d.). Using Peer Review to Improve Student Writing. *University of Michigan LSA*.  
<https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/instructors/guides-to-teaching-writing/using-peer-review-to-improve-student-writing.html>
  - a. This webpage provides detailed guidance about peer review and many supplemental resources, including grading criteria for peer review that are tailored to different types of writers.

Here are some strategies from the PAIRR team to enhance your peer review practices:

1. Create a **respectful, collegial environment** in peer review. Before doing peer review, ask students to craft a list of best practices around peer review and how they would like to be treated during the sessions. Remind them of this list before each peer review session. Also, guide students to apply their critical thinking skills while evaluating their peers' comments– they don't need to accept all comments, but they should take their peers' comments seriously, as peers are offering a valuable reader's perspective on the student's work.
2. **Model** effective peer review through examples that are based on your course assignments and rubrics. Students can build their understanding of how to create a constructive peer review by critiquing a variety of examples.

3. Emphasize that students should focus on **higher-order concerns** and offer **specific** feedback.
4. Have students write a **reflection** of the strengths and areas of improvement of their work, and any questions they have about it, before the peer review session. Students should utilize this reflection to guide their peers' feedback. For example, they might share their questions with their peers, which the peers could respond to, and/or ask their peers to focus on the particular areas of improvement while providing feedback.
5. Have students complete peer review in **groups of three** or four, so that they receive at least two readers' perspectives on their work.
6. Encourage students to **dialogue** with their peers about feedback and build this into the peer review process. Sophia includes talking with peers about the feedback as one of the steps they need to complete as part of peer review. You might offer sentence starters to foster dialogue, such as, "Could you tell me more about what you meant in this comment?" or "If I change X, would this comment still apply?" These dialogues can contribute to building a class community as well.

Many of these insights derive from Lisa Sperber's chapter "[Bad Idea: Now that We Have AI, We Can Ditch Human Feedback! Generative Idea: Combining Peer and AI Feedback](#)" from *Bad Ideas About AI and Writing*, Eds. Basgier, Mills, Rodak & Sharma. In WAC Clearinghouse Perspectives on Writing series.