

Peer review

Objectives

When you have finished this section, you will have:

- seen a student text from the position of the reader, allowing you to notice strengths and weaknesses
- used an assessment criteria to make helpful suggestions to a peer on her/his draft

Resources List

1. "Peer Review: What is peer review?" by University of Minnesota, Department of Writing Studies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3lkm8LsgoU>
2. "Peer Review: Commenting Strategies" by University of Minnesota, Department of Writing Studies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlSCMx9-fGA>
3. "Peer review demonstration" by Texas A & M University, Writing Centre <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCio7AbO3vo>

Key Concepts: Purpose of a peer review, Strategies for making helpful comments

Using an assessment criteria to give peer review

Before Class

1. Read this handout thoroughly
2. View items 1-3 listed under "Resources list"

1. After viewing video clip 2, discuss how students can learn to write helpful criticism of each other's work.
2. After viewing video clip 3, "Peer Review Demonstration" before class, discuss why Lauren gave a better peer review than Megan did.

Peer Review Instructions

Work in groups of 3

- Evaluate your peer's essay that has been provided by using the checklist below. **Use both the checklist AND annotate the essay itself with comments.** You may also write suggestions in the boxes below (see example below), but annotating the essay is a clearer way to comment and make suggestions.
- **Spend 30 minutes reviewing, 10 minutes reading your reviewers' feedback and 30 minutes discussing the feedback.**

- Do not focus on grammatical errors unless they prevent you from understanding the meaning. Highlight errors and if the meaning is unclear, write a note with the comments feature. Do not correct the error.

Before you start: The Spirit of Peer Feedback

Reviewers:

- We are all learning, one may be strong in cohesion, the other in finding great ideas, so... We are here to help, not to judge.
- We comment on the positive first, then on what can be improved.
As a reader of your peer's work, you are in a great position to point to what was very nicely written, interesting, insightful, cleverly put, well supported.

As a reader of your peer's work, you are also in a better position than the writer to notice where there are possible problems: lack of clarity, lack of relevance, lack of clear progression and logic, and so on.

Reviewees:

- Take this opportunity to get used to constructive feedback.
- Even if you feel the comments are a little harsh, be grateful that you are given an opportunity to improve your work. You reviewers might be wrong, but they might be right, so reflect and improve your work where needed.

Receiving feedback:

Read your peer's feedback and make notes of anything you agree with, you disagree with and anything unclear. Ask your reviewer to clarify. You can also clarify some elements for your reviewer, and see if this addresses their comment.

If you do not agree with a comment, but you are unsure, you can email your tutor (copy and paste your text and the comment on it).

Close the activity by saying a great THANK YOU to your reviewer for the time and effort they have put into giving you some help.



After the activity, spend some time revising to address the comments.

Example:

Peer Review Checklist

Use the following checklist to guide you in reviewing your classmate's text. Remember to use examples from the text to justify your answers.

| Content | Yes | No |
|--|-----|--------|
| 1. Is the information relevant to the prompt? 2. Has the information been presented in a way that it responds directly to the prompt? 3. ... 4. ... 5. ... 6. ... 7. ... | | ✓ ✓ |
| Suggestion(s) <i>The prompt has been misread. The prompt was ""Users should be free to choose what they want to read, watch or hear on the Internet." whereas the topic sentence reads "There must be a limitation to the freedom given to us to air our judgments." Instead of discussing the freedom of expression on the Internet, the writer should focus on the rights to exercising judgement in choosing what read, watch or hear.</i> | | |

Annotating your peer's essay: while reading your friend's work and answering the questions, you may also use the Quote button to make some notes in the text. In this case, use a different colour, so your peer can see the comments easily. The annotations can be used to do the following:

- Highlight an unclear phrase: xxxxxxxxxxxx (unclear)
- Highlight a weak logical relation xxx. Xxx (W Log Link)
- Make comments on the ideas: xxxxxxx (Is this relevant to your main point? Does this support your main point, it seems contradictory)
- Highlight any language problem: xxxxx (perhaps hedging would be useful here because...)
- Anything else which you want to mention.

Peer Review Checklist

Name of reviewee:

Name of reviewer:

| Content | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the text clearly answer the prompt? Is all the information relevant to the prompt? Has the information been presented in a way that it responds directly to the prompt? On the whole, is the text persuasive and the stance of the writer on the sources he/she uses is clear? Is evaluative language used effectively to indicate the writer's stance? Do the ideas reflect an understanding of the complexity of the topic? Are ideas strongly supported by evidence and good arguments? Does the essay use relevant citations (for example, synthesis and paraphrases?) Does the essay contain pertinent analysis and evaluation of source texts? Are the citations well referenced? Are the topic sentences supported by logical, valid, credible and relevant information/supporting ideas? Are all the supporting ideas in the paragraph relevant to the topic sentence? | | |
| Suggestion(s) | | |

| Organization | Yes | No |
|--|------------|-----------|
| <p>12. Does the text follow the expected 'genre'? Are the expected stages clearly visible in the paragraphing?</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>13. Does the thesis statement present a clear stand, with a very specific controlling idea?</p> <p>14. Does the background information in the introduction lead smoothly to the thesis?</p> <p>15. By the end of the introduction, is the scope and organization of the whole essay well defined?</p> <p>Body paragraphs</p> <p>16. Are all the paragraphs addressing and furthering the thesis?</p> <p>17. Does the topic sentence in each paragraph encapsulate the main idea of the whole paragraph? Does it also refer back (using a general noun, for example)?</p> <p>18. Are the paragraphs logically organized? Are they unified (all sentences deal with the topic sentence)?</p> <p>19. Do ideas flow smoothly from one sentence to another? Are there gaps between the sentences which are due to weak thematic progression?</p> <p>20. Are cohesive devices (referencing, transitions and link words) appropriately used to ensure that ideas "flow" well?</p> | | |
| Suggestion(s) | | |

| Language and academic register | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>21. Have features such as hedging, evaluative language, modality etc. been employed to maintain an academic style?</p> <p>22. Have reporting verbs been accurately used for integrating sources? Do they convey the writer's stance?</p> <p>23. Is there a full range of simple, compound and complex sentences? Are the various sentence types used appropriately to achieve the intended purpose or meaning?</p> <p>24. Is grammar used accurately?</p> | | |
| <p>Suggestions</p> | | |