

Peer Reviewing

Peer review allows you both to become a more critical reader of other work and to hear advice from your classmates about how your paper might be more successful. Please consider what kind of feedback you would like to receive and offer the same quality of feedback to your fellow writers.

Your reader's goal is to observe what the piece of writing, in its ideal incarnation, is trying to accomplish. To do this, asking your readers these three questions: "What do you see this piece as being *about*? What *works* in helping it succeed in this mission (i.e. what should stay)? What are the *challenges* it still faces (i.e. what could change)?"

By avoiding open-ended questions such as "What do you think?" or "Is it any good?" a writer and a reader can have a useful conversation about improving a piece of writing. You as the writer should always "host" the conversation so you don't end up feeling assaulted by well-meant but irrelevant advice. Use this model – 1) *What is there?* 2) *What works?* 3) *What challenges remain?* – to address specific parts of the manuscript: analysis, theme, structure, scene, character, dialogue, language.

Reader's Guide

- General reaction
 - Read the essay quickly to understand your peer's ideas.
 - On a separate sheet of paper, write in your own words your impression of what the essay's central point is.
 - On the separate sheet of paper write a few sentences addressing your first impressions. Is it well organized? Has it done what it set out to do?
- A closer look
 - Using the comment function on MS Word (or Google docs, or...), mark which sections feel most effective and which ones still feel unclear.
 - In a letter or a longer note at the end, explain how well the analysis supports the central purpose as explained in the introduction. Mention which parts of the paper detract from this purpose and explain why.
- In class
 - During peer review discussion of the analysis in class, share your ideas. Bounce ideas off each other. Help each other with your own expertise.

Peer Review Questions

Reviewer Name: _____

Writer under Review: _____

The point of peer reviews is to work together to locate what these papers are working to say and then give informed, respectful suggestions to help the writer say it more clearly. Use these questions to help guide discussion, but please be brief in answering them. The main purpose of your peer discussion is to have a discussion.

- 1.) Does the analysis seem to have a clear focus (thesis) about how the story in question works? Does the introduction paragraph set this up in a way that satisfies you as a reader?

- 2.) How is the paper organized in terms of the supporting paragraphs? Do they seem linked in a logical way, and do they all seem to fit under the umbrella of the introduction? Do the transitions between paragraphs feel organic and well-guided (instead of jarring or arbitrary?)

- 4.) In the supporting paragraphs, does the writer explore each supporting idea fully and fairly? Could anything could be shown more fully/fairly?

- 5.) Does MLA citation look good, both in terms of quotes and summary being woven cleanly into the writer's prose, and in terms of the works cited page?

- 6.) What sorts of evidence (quotes, examples, etc) are used in the supporting paragraphs? How well is this evidence close-read (i.e. how well does the writer connect the tiny sentence-level details to their broader repercussions in the story's whole effect?)

7.) What does the conclusion do? Does it summarize the analysis, or bring up new questions, or ripple outward, showing the stakes of the story? Does it echo the beginning in any way?

8.) Does the writer's voice come through consistently in the writing? What do you notice about it and how would you characterize the voice?

9.) Overall, what are the greatest strengths of this paper? Which parts could be improved?

10.) For the creative writing proposal, what does the story seem to be most about? This is where we establish what the story's "ideal version" is hoping to be.

11.) Which parts of the story proposal intrigue you most as a potential reader?

12.) Do any parts of the story proposal seem unrelated, confusing, or arbitrary? Explain.

13.) How well does the writer make clear how and why these particular works of literature provide instruction and inspiration for their story?