Guidelines for Peer Review

AFST 379

Every writer knows the feeling of getting so close to the writing that it’s impossible to look at the piece objectively. The notoriously difficult process of evaluating one’s own writing is especially hard immediately after one completes a draft. That’s why it’s essential to get an evaluation from a peer.

Some Guidelines for Providing and Receiving Written and Oral Feedback:

1. Note things you liked about the paper. Give praise where it is due.
2. Be honest, helpful, and kind. Our goal is to help each other improve, and to build on our strengths. Praise may feel good, but constructive criticism is really much more useful.
3. Make marginal notes when you see something that could be improved. However, do not rewrite the person’s paper for them. Give suggestions, not directions.
4. Focus on how the argument is supported (or not) rather than whether you agree or disagree with it. Don’t get into debates over questions of individual value and belief.
5. Don’t confine your comments to mechanical details.
6. Aim to help your peer see how to improve future work as well as the current draft.
7. When your peer is reviewing your paper, open your mind and embrace the opportunity for feedback. Be gracious in accepting criticism and comments about your writing. You don’t need to explain or defend why you wrote the way you did. You may not always agree with your classmate, but you do need to listen carefully to what he/she has to say. Learn to seek input from others – it will help you become a better writer.

8. **Remember to sign your name at the top of each paper that you review. You will receive credit for providing valuable feedback to your peer.**

NOTE: If you do not participate in the peer-editing review, you will not be allowed to submit a final draft of your discussion paper for a grade!
REVISION QUESTIONS FOR PEER COLLABORATORS

Title
a. Is the title creative? Does it introduce the main topic and points to the argument?
b. Suggestions for improvement?

_____/4

Thesis statement
a. Is the overall purpose of the paper clear to you from the thesis sentence?
b. Does the thesis adequately predict the paper's plan of development?

_____/4

Support for the thesis
a. Does every paragraph and sentence in the paper clearly support the thesis?
b. Are there portions of the paper unrelated to the thesis? (For example, are there unnecessary summaries or sections of apparent padding?) What are those?
c. Are there sufficient examples and pieces of evidence to support the thesis persuasively? Underline specific examples.

_____/6

Organization
a. Is the overall organization of the paper clear and effective?
b. Did you feel lost at any point? Where?
c. Are the introduction and the conclusion effective? Suggestions for improvement?
Insight
a. Does the paper convey interesting insights into its subject?
b. What are some of those insights?

Bibliography
a. Is it done in the correct format with no errors? Circle any errors you find.
b. How many sources are listed? Are the sources reliable? Do they display a diverse range of sources?

EDITING QUESTIONS FOR PEER COLLABORATORS
Transitions
a. Are the transitions between sections and paragraphs effective? Point out specific examples where these transitions are effective.
b. Did you feel lost at any point? Where?
c. Suggestions for improvement.

Style
a. Is the style sufficiently clear, varied, and graceful?
b. Where are the unclear, monotonous, or awkward passages?
d. Do you see any wordy passages? Circle them!
e. Do you see any clichés? Circle them!
f. Do you see any excessive use of to be verb forms (is, are, etc.)? Point out areas that could be changed.
Diction
a. Does the language seem appropriate for its intended audience?
b. Do you see any discriminatory language? Point it out.
c. Do you see any excessively formal or informal language? Point it out.

Mechanics
a. Have the mechanical details (spelling, punctuation, etc.) been handled accurately and carefully?
b. What errors did you notice (too many introductory phrases/ passive vs. active voice/ wording/ too many prepositions)?

Overall quality
a. What are the paper's main strengths?

Suggestions for Revision
What specific recommendations can you make concerning the revision of this paper? ____/10