

Peer Reviews

Purpose: Although the writing process appears to be isolated, it is not. The process of creating a paper is not limited to you—the writer—putting ideas down on page. You are in the position of interacting with an audience. The peer reviews provide you a chance to interact with members of an audience. This occurrence is not unusual considering that professional writers dialogue about their writing in workshops, with editors, colleagues, and professional proofreaders in order to gain insight about their work. Such collaboration is not limited to proofreading for mechanical errors. It encompasses such items as clarity, tone, purpose, and the writer’s overall effectiveness. Review is vital for a paper to be successful.

Structure: As you read your peer’s work, try not to consider the mechanical errors—punctuation, grammar, spelling. Instead, focus on the ideas, the support, and the appeal of the writing. Read the paper through once and try to answer the questions the writer asks. Consider this reading global. You are getting a feel for the piece. Then go back and insert in brackets things you found particularly strong or weak—briefly explain your reasoning. Finally, if there is something the writer has not asked and strikes you as particularly strong or weak, mention to the writer what this is. Remember to write your name in the “Reviewed by:” portion of the paper. I will not be able to give you credit for the review if you do not take ownership of the review. Print out the review and place it at the station you worked at. Next, close the document—don’t *save*—and reopen. Move on to another station. You should spend around 15 minutes for each paper and should peer review three papers.

The reviews should be somewhat specific and provide the writer a direction with what might be changed or what might remain the same. In other words, if something strikes you as weak, briefly explain why. If something strikes you as strong, briefly explain why.

The following are examples of peer reviews from your class. They are responses to the following question:

What will make my piece more effective?

Not so good—Stronger word choice.

Not so good—Consider revision of ending.

Okay—Use more interesting words to convey your emotion.

Better—Maybe suggest what you would do to get the girl next time. What did you learn?

Best—This piece could have had a few more metaphors to grab the reader into a more detailed description of how you felt and what you were doing.

Best—You can make it more descriptive in some areas like the characters. You can describe their personalities too to give us a better picture of who they are and how they really relate to your story.