

## PEER REVIEW MEMO GUIDELINES

You will be helping your collegiate colleagues by reviewing and criticizing each other's essays in the first draft stage. After listening to the oral presentation and comments of the other two people in your group in class, you will take a copy of their essays home with you. You will then compose a memo addressing the 15 main points on this sheet in prose style. You may also mark directly on the essay in order to refer to specific areas. Be sure to phrase your criticism in a manner that will enable your peers to utilize your comments in the improvement of their essay. Begin this way:

To:

From:

Date:

Re: (meaning regarding)

State what you think the purpose of the essay is. Be sure to respond to the specific comments of the author regarding the paper. Then answer the following questions in complete sentences however creatively you wish (within reason!). Remember to be constructive and respectful.

- 1) If you were reading this paper for the first time, would you grasp its purpose? Is its main idea clear? Do the points support it? Are the tone and style appropriate for the audience (college students and their professor)? Is the language appropriate?
- 2) What thesis directs the whole essay? If you can't find one, can you suggest one? If the thesis isn't strong, suggest a way to strengthen it.
- 3) Is the introduction interesting, clear, and easy to follow? What is the best feature of the introduction? How could the introduction be stronger?
- 4) Is the topic sufficiently narrow for a paper of this length?
- 5) Does the support for the thesis follow in a logical manner? How so? Does the writer follow through with examples to support his/her thesis? Can you suggest ways to further support the thesis?
- 6) What more would you like the writer to tell you about the details of the significant incident or issue?
- 7) Are the paragraphs themselves (internally) organized well? Are some too short/long for their subject? Which is the best paragraph and why? Which paragraph needs the most work and why? Mark those paragraphs you think need work and explain why.
- 8) Where does the writer make generalizations? Does he/she support them with specific details/facts? How so? Are there any places where s/he could use more? Can you suggest any?
- 9) Is the conclusion a good ending for the essay? What is particularly good about the conclusion? How could the conclusion be stronger?
- 10) What seem to you the essay's major strengths? What major weaknesses stand out?
- 11) Comment on the style in this essay. It is simplistic? Sophisticated? Explain. Is there a variety in sentence structure? Do they flow? Are there any that can be made stronger or clearer? Suggest ways to improve them.
- 12) Are there any striking grammatical problems in this essay? Mark any of the following that need work: spelling, grammar, punctuation, connection between thesis, body of paper, conclusion. Explain your reasons for claiming these need work. Can you make any helpful suggestions?
- 13) Are there any parts of this essay that confused you, leading you to think the writer needs to explain a bit further?
- 14) Give one argument or example that the author has overlooked that could strengthen the essay. Give one argument or example that could best contradict the author's thesis.
- 15) Does the essay meet the requirements of the assignment and the objective the author gave you? If so, explain why. If not, suggest what you would do if you were going to re-write the essay so that it would meet the author's objective and the requirements of the essay.

Now close your memo and sign it. Make two copies so that you can return one to your peer and one to me.