PEER REVIEW

Preview

1. Read the introduction. If you are previewing an essay with a thesis (an idea that the writer is arguing for), try to identify the writer's thesis. In this paper, you might instead look for a statement of purpose. This is similar to the statement of the author's progression that I've suggested you include in summaries. You might write some statement such as "The purpose of this paper is to examine . . . and to suggest ways in which . . ." Or you might write something like "In this paper, I first summarize so and so's major premises before going on to . . ." Although you would not use this approach in a shorter paper, for longer pieces it is very appropriate and helps guide your reader.

2. Read through the paper once without making any marks.

3. Read it again and annotate it as you would an article you were reading. In other words, you are reading with pen in hand.

Reading and Responding

1. Identify a logical structure. What organizational units or "chunks" can you identify. You might want to suggest subheadings to your writer. For example, a final heading might be Implications for Teaching Writing and appear in the paper at the left underlined. Write, at the end of the essay, a summary of your peer's organization. If the organization is haphazard and lacks definition, say so—but also try to suggest ways to improve.

2. Check the writer's paragraphs by locating the main idea and identifying the support for the idea. If there is no main idea, write this in the margin. Similarly, tell the writer if the paragraph lacks appropriate examples. Also tell the writer if she or he has failed to tag the sources of the idea, attributing them to their author. (e.g., "Brenda Spatt, unlike the authors of The Writer's Craft, for example, presents detailed instructions for . . .," or "A systematic outline, Spatt argues, is necessary . . .") The first time you use an author you use the full name; subsequently you use the last name. You are looking for paragraphs that are developed fully and often capped off with a summation of the point your peer is making. Customarily, it takes from five to seven sentences to develop an idea adequately.

3. You can see how the paragraph you are scrutinizing complements the writer's thesis or statement of purpose. If it doesn't fit, tell your peer.

Editing

1. Help your peer out by trying to rewrite any infelicities you find. Also edit and proofread for spelling.

Reviewing

1. Write an end comment in which you tell the writer what you found interesting as a reader. Also tell her or him what you think was done well. Then, based on your evaluation from previewing, reading, responding, and editing, suggest ways in which the writer might make the paper better. Be sure to print out the message you receive from your peer about your own paper as well.