

Professor Belli
ENG 1101, Fall 2013

Peer Review: Responding to First Drafts of Final Project Write-Up

Part I – Argument: Thesis and Purpose

1. Does the write-up begin in a focused way, or do you finish reading it unsure about what the point/argument of this project is? Does it give an overview of the write-up's argument? Does it provide key terms and their definitions? Is it specific enough or is it too vague/general? Make specific comments on the draft itself (brief questions such as "so what?" or "how/why?" or "what does this term mean?" can be really useful).

In addition, in the space below, explain your thoughts on the write-up's opening paragraph/s. Do not simply write that the Introduction/presentation of issue/argument is "good" or "bad" or "specific" or "vague." Tell your group members "why" it is this way and offer suggestions for revision (based on your understanding of how the report as a whole works/develops).

2. Finally, consider the write-up's title. Is it appropriate for the project? Is it specific enough in describing the write-up's particular argument (remember, a two-part title using a colon is a good method)? Make comments on the draft itself.

Part II – Paragraphs: Content, Organization, and Development

1. Go through each body paragraph and, in the margins, write the claim presented there (jot down just a few words ... maximum one short sentence). If there is more than one **main** idea (claim), number them and write them down as well.

2. Then, go back and read the first sentence of each body paragraph. Does this first sentence adequately represent the claim of the paragraph **and** explain the **significance** of this idea (why these details are important)? On the draft, write "yes" or "no" next to each first sentence and then explain why or why not.

3. Is each paragraph clearly linked to main argument? Or does your peer ever stray from their main point? On the draft, indicate paragraphs/sections that are not connected to the essay's main argument (are not relevant) and explain why.

4. Does each paragraph build on the previous one (develop the argument further), or is the argument repetitive (stating the same thing over and over again in slightly different words)? Provide comments (with explanations) in the margins.

5. Are there effective transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas? Does the report flow smoothly from beginning to end? Is the report's progression logical and coherent? In the margins, indicate any places you feel that the writing is disconnected (and explain why).
6. Are there any points in the argument where you can honestly say, "so what?" (are they irrelevant, boring, obvious, or not specific enough)? Do your peers simply present facts/information and summarize her sources? If so, indicate these areas in the margins of the draft and offer suggestions for improvement.

Part III – Sources: Comprehension, Analysis, and Incorporation

1. Do your peers demonstrate a strong knowledge of their sources? Do they show a good understanding of the sources' arguments/ideas? Are there any places where you think your peers misunderstood or distorted the meaning/content of a source or didn't address important aspects of its content? Explain your thoughts in the space below and make comments in the margins to address specific cases.

2. Is the necessary background information (the essential/relevant information you need as a reader to understand the argument/recommendations the writers will eventually make) provided at the beginning of the report? Remember that you need a significant amount of local context (the specifics of the City Tech "site" the group chose) to frame your project.

Please note in the margins which paragraphs serve as background information and whether or not they are in the appropriate place in the report (e.g., do they come halfway through the report, when a reader would have benefited from them on page 2?). Also please note any places where you feel confused or wish you had more information about what is being discussed.

3. How well do your peers incorporate examples/summary/quotations from the various sources (remember, the observations and surveys are sources) into their own writing? Is this material well-integrated into the body of your peers' report (introduced and then explained), or is it awkward and out-of-place? Is it relevant to your peers' argument (does it support a point they make)?

In the margins of the draft, indicate whether examples/summary/quotes are appropriate (do they support the argument being made in that paragraph?), relevant (for quotes, is it necessary to use the author's exact words here or is the point already clear?), introduced (not just thrown into the essay abruptly/without warning), and explained (do your classmates provide sufficient analysis of the example?). If the quote/detail is just fluff (thrown in to fill up space), please indicate so.

4. Is the use of the texts (either direct quotations/examples or summary/paraphrase) balanced with your peers' own ideas and analysis (do the sources occupy too much – or too little – space in the argument)? Explain your response below.

5. Do your peers cite their sources correctly in MLA style (both parenthetically within the essay and in a separate "Works Cited" page)? If not, offer suggestions for correction on the draft itself. Please note that correct/effective citation is crucial for a researched report!

6. Does the write-up provide possible opposing viewpoints/counter-arguments (or do your peers simply provide one side of the story)? Are these counter-arguments adequately answered/dealt with by your peers within the course of her essay or are they presented in a way that undermines their own position/recommendations (e.g., Are they mentioned but never answered? Are they presented at the very end of the report so the reader leaves with doubts about the validity of the essay's thesis)? Please explain below and offer suggestions for improvement.

Part IV – Recommendations

Are the recommendations concrete/specific to the local situation (are they context-specific)? Are they fully articulated and supported (is there not only a rationale for why they should be chosen but a plan of action as to how they will be implemented)?

Make sure to address the "so what?" issue and to consider the follow questions:

- Are the recommendations of your peers clear and specific (or are they vague/general)? Why or why not?
- Are the recommendations engaging and more than obvious statements of fact (are they new and interesting)? Why or why not?
- Are the recommendations realistic, and supportable (or does it seem farfetched or irrelevant to the topic)?
- Does the write-up specifically address the purpose of this assignment (to write an argumentative researched report that presents recommendations to a focused problem/issue)?

Part V – Conclusion

Consider the conclusion (final paragraph/s): Does it provide a sense of closure to this write-up? Does it adequately sum up the report's argument/recommendations (and then hint at some broader significance/context) or do you finish reading it feeling unsatisfied? Does it present any new information that confuses you? Explain your specific thoughts in the margins.

Part V – Tone: Style and Diction

1. Describe the tone/voice of the report: Is the tone appropriate for both the assignment and the audience? Why or why not? Consider which "person" your peers write in (1st, 2nd, or 3rd). Explain your thoughts below and address specific cases in the margins.

2. Are there any words/phrases that seem awkward or harsh to you (that might insult/alienate/confuse readers)? Please address these diction (word choice) issues when they occur on the draft itself.

3. Pay particular attention to the authority and credibility of your peers throughout the write-up. Does it seem over-confident/one-sided (too much like personal opinion rather than close analysis and logical argumentation)? Or does it seem too neutral (doesn't really take a stand or support the argument/recommendations)? Explain below and offer specific suggestions for improvement on the draft itself.

Part VI: Overall Impression

Finally, you should write a "terminal" (end) comment of at least two full (5+ sentences each) paragraphs. Make sure to start off by stating the positive aspects of the write-up (things you think your peers did successfully). Then, choose the main three points that you think your peers should focus on as they revise their write-up. Make sure to be as specific as possible. It is not necessary to repeat every comment you have made already ... streamline your feedback to best help your classmates. You will probably have to read the whole report through again (and look over the comments you have made) to figure out how to effectively/concisely sum up your responses.