

### Peer Review Strategies

Peer review is a really wonderful way of drawing on a classmate's expertise (i.e., from a peer and not a teacher) to help you edit your work. It's especially helpful for the kind of public writing we are doing: you can help others get their writerly points across by reading as a fellow writer and as an audience member for their work.

Some easily-identifiable elements you should look for as a peer reviewer in a classmate's post:

- Does the post have a clear claim (or point, like we talked about in class)?
- How is the post structured and does that structure make sense?
- Do the writer's paragraphs flow from each other?
- Is there a Works Cited and is it done correctly?
- Comment on whatever else you notice that is done well or needs work

Bottom line: let this author know what got through to you!

Feedback on one's writing can be tricky to receive, especially directly from the person offering it. Here is some guidance for the breakout sessions:

#### Advice to Writer

1. Do not apologize
2. Do not explain.
3. Be quiet. Really listen to what people say and what is behind what they say.
4. Don't reject what readers tell you, but don't be intimidated by it either.
5. Remember you are always right and always wrong.

#### Advice to Peer Reviewer

1. Listen actively.
2. In your critique, try to use statements beginning with "I."
3. Give specific reactions to specific parts—passages, lines, phrases, individual words.
4. React to the writing, not the writer.
5. No kind of reaction you have is wrong even if it seems odd to you. Mention it anyway, kindly, even if you can't explain it.
6. Even if someone has reacted in a similar way to yours, repeat your own anyway. The writer needs to hear what the similarities and differences are.
7. Remember: you are always right and you are always wrong.

Examples of things you might say as a peer reviewer:

I got the picture  
This part made me think . . .  
These lines are effective because . . .  
That sentence makes me believe what you're saying  
I saw this . . . I was right there with you  
I think you got the point across that you . . .  
This part was key to showing your effect  
I was confused by . . .  
I'm having trouble with . . .  
This tripped me up a little . . .  
I was lost at . . .  
this broke the flow for me . . .  
I'm still not sure what you're trying to say . . .  
I don't quite understand why . . .

#### Advice to Everyone:

- You are in a first draft peer review breakout session; the drafts won't be as polished as they will be when the final post is published. Your role is to help one other improve drafts through constructive criticism.
- Sentence-level discussion should be minimized. You should discuss organization, focus, thesis/claim, and use of evidence, as well as written tone and emotional resonance. Feedback on all of these elements will be more helpful to your fellow writers (and from them to you).
- It's hard but so useful to be both a writer and a reader!
- Because the breakout session is a conversation among participants, you should address your feedback comments to the writer.