A Peer Review Prompt Compendium: 6 PR Options

Peer Review Workshop A: Prompt

1. <u>Read the opening and concluding paragraphs only.</u> Underline the one sentence, from either paragraph, that most clearly gives the author's argument. On the back of the last page, write three reasons someone might *disagree* with this argument, and three questions that a doubting reader might ask.

2. Read the essay all the way through; you may make *short* margin comments as you go along if you'd like (*yes! huh? good point, I've seen this too, go girl,* ☺, *say more?*) Add 2-3 sentences at the end saying what you like/remember best, & why.

3. Somewhere on the draft, praise the author where his/her point and explanation are most clear and/or convincing (why?). Also, note a place where the author's point/explanation is not quite as clear: what might s/he do to help the reader out?

4. Somewhere on the draft, praise the author for a good sentence or transition; explain what you like about it. Also, note a place where a transition or sentence doesn't flow so well: suggest two possible revisions.

5. Check back with your opening disagreements/questions: if you think the author's essay would be stronger by responding to one of those points—or if the bulk of the author's essay/argument seems to you now to be quite different from what you first expected—write the author a suggestion or two about meeting the expectations of a resistant audience. Sign your name. As you return the essay, give the author a sincere, specific complement.

Peer Review Workshop B: Review-Strategies Discussion & Models

1. Class discussion: improving a thesis argument (for this particular assignment): How do each of these theses succeed (or not)?

    a. Susan B. Anthony makes arguments about women's rights in her speech. (fact/summary; also, not about **strategy**)

    b. Anthony uses a lot of appeals in her speech. (more on strategy, but still description, not judging)

    c. Anthony's speech is effective because it appeals to logos more than pathos. (specific, judging, needs to address **balance**)

    d. Anthony's speech is effective in reaching her audience of male politicians because it appeals to their needs by using logic rather than being an emotional rant about her frustrations.

2. With your partner, suggest a change to each of the following statements to make it into a stronger thesis judgment.

    a. Kennedy uses appeals to ethos, but he doesn't spend much time explaining the logic or giving specific examples.

    b. Douglass's speech was good, but it might have been counterproductive for that particular audience.

3. With your partner, write at least 3 questions or suggestions to help the author of this paragraph [discussion follows]:

    Granny D's speech uses appeals to ethos and pathos. "We have engaged the press of the nation to shine a great light on this cancer, and still there is no movement by the leaders." There is an appeal to things we all believe in about our country here. Also, the image of "cancer" shows pathos. Later in the speech, she also talks about helping schools. I agree with this, because schools in Virginia really need help. In my school some of the classes didn't even have books, which made doing a senior project hard. Schools are about how we value education. Also, schools are an emotional topic. Granny D's audience would have been persuaded by her using these appeals.

Peer Review Workshop B: Prompt

(Note: This workshop uses anonymous drafts: each student brings 2 copies, picks 2 essays from table at front of class)

Reader One: Answer these questions about the first draft you review.

1. Read the first 2 and last 2 paragraphs. <u>Double underline</u> the sentence or two that give the author's clearest, most specific argument: write 'thesis?' by it/them.

Check items on this list:

    _____ the best thesis is nearer the start rather than the end of the essay If not, write "transplant to your introduction?" next to it

    _____ the author gives a blunt judgment about the overall speech **and** specifies "why?" **and** connects the writer's own reaction. If yes, write "good judgments!" If not, write questions in the margin: "What's your overall judgment ?" or "*How* is the speech 'awesome'?" or "Does it persuade *you*?"

____ the conclusion helps explain why someone might want to know about this speechwriter's strategies or abilities. If not, or if the conclusion seems vague, write questions in the margin: what's interesting about this? who might learn from this? what do you want to say to *your* audience?

2. Next, read only the <u>first</u> sentence of <u>each</u> <u>body</u> <u>paragraph</u>. Write a comment for each:

• If the sentence is a "she-said" sentence ("Then Fisher writes…") or just gives a description ("Anthony uses pathos"), write "so what do <u>you</u> think?" in the margin

• If the sentence is the author's judgment, related to the thesis sentence, <u>underline it</u> and write "good judgment!"

• If the sentence contains any of the transition words that you read about this week, box them and write "good transition!"

• If the sentence is an argument but you're not completely clear about why or how it's connected to the author's thesis, write "is this a new topic???" in the margin.

3. Now read the whole essay through, focusing on trying to help the author stay on track with his/her argument.

• Write at least <u>two more compliments</u>: good idea! say more on this! I didn't think of this!

• Write at least <u>two more questions</u>: ask "how…" and "why…" or ask "how is this connected to ___?" if you get confused

4. Write the author a short note at the end of the essay: what did you like best? why? Also give one suggestion: what one change would most help emphasize or expand the author's own judgment? **Sign your name**; return the essay.

Reader Two: Answer these questions about the second draft you review:

1. Read the essay all the way through, writing at least one short comment per page. Give at least two specific compliments about evidence: "This is good because…" Ask at least three questions: "How does this quote relate? Why is this pathos?"

2. Choose a Focus Paragraph (a body parag. in the middle of the essay—if the essay is pretty strong, choose its weakest parag.). Label it "Focus Paragraph 1" Check your list:

____ The paragraph has a strong sentence at the start or finish that features the author's argument

• If the strong sentence is only at the end, <u>underline</u> it and suggest: "use to <u>start</u> parag?"

• If there is no argument sentence, try one of your own: "I think this paragraph shows that the speech was …."

____ The paragraph is all on one topic, every single sentence related.

If not, squiggly-underline any sentence that seems not to relate, and ask: "New topic?"

____ The paragraph contains more than one quotation

If not, find at least one place to suggest: "Add a quote here about___, such as ____ ."

____ All quotations in the paragraph are <u>short</u>, <u>integrated</u>, and <u>cited</u> correctly. If there are problems, make suggestions.

____ All quotations in the paragraph are followed by <u>explanations</u> to show you exactly which words make which points

Be *skeptical*! Imagine Prof. Reid's views: "How is this a refutation? Which words show pathos? Why is this a good appeal?"

3. If the essay is a bit on the short side, help your classmate out with at least <u>two</u> suggestions:

• "Add more here about appeals to ___ (or refutations, or audience, or evidence)"

• "This chunk is important: split this one paragraph into two and give more examples"

• "You could add a paragraph here about ___ "

• "Are there any exceptions or gray areas? Does the speechwriter have any flaws or limitations? Is s/he better at ___ than ___?"

4. If you find a paragraph that goes on and on and on, suggest where the author could <u>split</u> it into two paragraphs: "Maybe split this paragraph here?"

5. Write the author a short note at the end of the essay: which paragraph had the clearest, most well-supported idea? what did you like about it? which parag. seemed the least clear to you? why? **Sign your name**; return the essay.

1. **Peer Review #1:** Read the **Interview Report Grading Criteria**. Then open the post that came in directly <u>after</u> yours in your Report Workshop Discussion Board. (If yours is the last essay posted, and it is at least 3:15 pm Wednesday, read the very first Report posted in your group.). Open the document that is attached.

2. **Open a new Word document; Save it; Type your answers** to these questions:

   a. Which of the **Interview Criteria** does the author do the best on? Copy/paste to give exact examples of **two** things the author does well (two of the same criteria, or two different criteria)

   b. Which of the **Interview Criteria** should the author try to improve on? Copy/paste to give at least **two** exact examples. For each, suggest a way to improve.

   c. Explain what you liked best about the author's report.

   d. Make one more suggestion about the main thing you think the author should work on.

3. **Reply** to your peer's report-posting message; **copy/paste** your answers into the message; **send** it.

4. **Peer Review #2:** Read the essay posted directly <u>after</u> yours in your Report Discussion Board. (If yours was the first essay posted, choose the last essay posted to review—be sure you're reading the essay, not someone's review comments.)

5. **Repeat Steps 2-3** with the second Peer Review. (You can put your answers in the same Word document if you'd like.)

6. **Email or save to disk your Comment document.** This serves as back-up to ensure you get credit for this work.

Grading Criteria: A **report** is not a **transcript** of an interview. The person creating the report has to **choose, organize, and present** the best possible information to help his/her audience—in this case, to help the audience learn to write better in this field.

Report is skimmable for key information	Report organizes information by topic, clusters similar information together rather than just repeating the interview
Report gives just enough back-ground for audience, without getting too deep into any one story	Report visually emphasizes key information through headers or white space
Report presents selected information concisely	Report has coherence, shape, flow; "adds up" to a point
Report gives useful information for writer in the field	Report uses formal or semi-formal tone
Report captures the audience's attention early	Report balances summary/paraphrase with short, vivid quotations
Report presents interesting, vivid, specific information ("I can see it!")	Report avoids distracting errors or stylistic glitches; Report uses direct, lively language in readable sentences

Note to instructors: Peer reviewers who get to Step 7 have met my core expectations; Steps 8, 9, and 10 help keep speedsters usefully engaged until I call time: "Finish the answer you're working on and skip to #11."

Warm-up: Collaborative listing of good essay criteria on board, which I organize roughly into categories of argument/support, structure, and mechanics; also a review of quotation SLICE-ing: Select, Limit, Integrate, Cite, & Explain.

Authors: If you have questions you'd like your reader to answer, write them in the margins or on the last page of each draft.

1. Write your name and the author's name on a separate sheet of paper (your "Workshop Sheet").

2. From the list of "good essay criteria" we just put on the board, or from your own knowledge, *choose three criteria* that could be used to judge a "connect and conclude" essay like this one: choose at least one "structure" criterion and at least one "argument/support" criterion. List all three on your paper, with lots of space in between for you to write comments.

3. Read the essay. Write short comments in the margins as you go through, but don't worry about grammar yet.

4. <u>Double underline</u> the one sentence in the intro or conclusion that best makes the author's connection-plus-conclusion clear. Write next to it: "here's

your best overall argument!" Then *double star* ** the author's best example/explanation, and write "great evidence!" next to it.

5.   For your *first criterion*, write out one sentence *praising* the author for something she or he did pretty well. Be sure to say *where* this happened, and/or to *say why* exactly you think it's good. (You can add stars or smiley faces or underline parts and tell the writer "See paragraph 3" or "Bottom of page 2.")

6.   For that same criterion, write out one sentence telling the author about some part of the essay where she or he didn't do quite so well on this aspect. (You can put X's or frowns or squiggly underlines on the essay to help the author see.) *Then* write one sentence in which you *suggest a specific change*: "Maybe you should try…."

7.   Repeat steps 5 & 6 for your second and third criteria: be sure to explain *why* it's good and give *specific* suggestions.

8.   Answer the author's question(s), if any; try to give suggestions. (Remember: if the author is asking, the author probably doesn't like this part much and wants your help to make it better *even if you think it's okay*!)

9.   Check all of the author's quotations: suggest *two* places to improve a quotation; say whether it should be "integrated," "cut," "explained" or "cited" better. Mark *one* place where the author could include a second quote.

10. Choose one more criterion from the board (or from your head), something that seems to fit the author's paper or concerns or writing style. Write that criterion down, and complete steps 5 & 6 one more time.

11. Sign your name on the *draft* as well as the workshop sheet; give your Workshop Sheet and the essay to the author.

12. On the draft that you're handing in to me, please write at least one short question per page in the margins ("enough evidence here?" "do I make my point?" "does this transition work?" "too much here?") and two general questions at the end of the essay for me to answer.
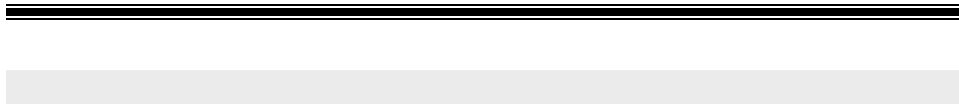
Peer Review E: For an Advanced Nonfiction Writing Class

Authors: Complete a Feedback Guide: Required for all workshop drafts

On a separate sheet of paper, put your name, your essay's title, and the workshop date. Type out 3-5 questions/issues that you hope your readers will respond to after they've read your essay. Ask as specifically and honestly as possible: try not to ask, "Is the organization ok?" when what's going through your head is really more like, "I think I have too many things going on in paragraph 4, but I can't figure out how to fix it."

You might vary your questions in one or more of these ways:

- ask for suggestions ("how can I…?") rather than asking yes/no questions
- reveal your goals ("I want parag. 3 to ___, but I'm worried that it ____")
- ask about ongoing issues ("I'm trying to get better at ___; how can I improve page 2?")
- request exact reader responses ("When did you figure out that I ____? Where did you most feel ___?")
- share your ideas for revision/expansion ("I'm thinking about adding ____; should I?")

You may use copies of the same Guide for all your readers, or write up different questions for different readers.

Append a "Heat Rating" guide: do you want Mild (mostly general/supportive), Medium, or Hot (specific and high-standards) feedback? (We'll talk about this more in class.)

Reading #1: Warm-up

- For the essay you marked "#1," read the Feedback Guide & "heat rating"; then read the essay.
- As you read, you may ***annotate*** with a few very short responses about ***very particular elements*** (but Not Grammar!): a phrase you think is funny or apt or engaging; a sentence that confuses you; a question you have. Consider <u>double underlines</u> and <u>wavy underlines</u> as quick ways to mark passages that impress or distract you. ***Try to keep up some reading speed***.
- Re-read the Feedback Guide. You should keep it in mind as you respond, though you don't need to respond to every question directly.

- Include at least *two specific, directive praises*: "I liked your _____ here because it _____ " or "this was your best _____ because _____" or "I can really See What You Mean here."
- Include at least *two specific suggestions for improvement or extension*: "Try saying more/less about ___ here so that you _____ better" or "Maybe this could come earlier in order to _____" or "What if you made this more about ___ and less about _____?" or "I don't understand about _____; can you explain?" **Sign your name as Reader.**

Reading #2: In-Depth Response
- For the essay marked "#2," check the "heat rating" and the Feedback Guide. Read the essay.
- As you read, you may quickly annotate (but don't *edit*) the essay.
- Answer the Feedback-Guide questions using specific *praises* and *suggestions*. Take your time.
- Also consider your own "reader greediness": Where do you want *more* from the author?
- If you're stuck with how to respond, consider *one or two* of the questions from the Assignment Packet (adapted from Perl & Schwartz).
- **Sign your name as reader**. Move the copy to the bottom of your stack.

Reading #3 (& #4): Quick-read
- Read the Feedback Guide and then the essay that you marked "#3."
- As you read, you may quickly annotate (but not *edit*) the essay.
- Answer one Feedback Guide question, if you have time.
- **Sign your name**. Hand all copies back to their authors.

Post-Reading:
- **Readers**: Take time to *speak with* each *author* about his/her essay. Put your finger on something in the draft that you can comment on.
- **Authors**: take a minute to note down (on one of the three marked drafts) Three Revision Possibilities based on what you read and what your comments were today.
- **Authors**: On the (clean) draft coming to me, indicate 1-2 things you *now already know* you'd want to improve/change.

Self-Review F: Guided Revision Workshop

Self-Workshop, Research Project

Complete some or all of the following steps, where appropriate, on your most recent clean copy of your Research Essay. Proceed at your own pace, individually and/or with a partner where helpful or necessary. Ask Prof. Reid if you have any questions.

Small changes to the Big Picture: Argument, evidence, audience

1. *Envision Grandness*: Try writing a sentence—perhaps for your intro or your conclusion—that links your issue to a big-picture, a major 10-year-project, something to inspire audiences. The trick is to still sound honest, not corny or Engfishy or pie-in-the-sky-ish.

2. *Be Real*: Quickly brainstorm several sentences in which you give your exact target audience two or three *small* things to do or think or implement that would get them out of their chairs, start them on the road to making change, and let them see that they've accomplished something. Double-check your research: do you have any examples or expert testimony to support or demonstrate the taking of this kind of small step? Can you incorporate one or more of these ideas into the start or finish of your essay?

3. *Attending to Arguments*: Be sure that you're making *arguments* when you want to make arguments: at the beginnings or endings of paragraphs or chunks, for instance. Most paragraphs in a research-based argument essay, should have some identifiable argument. If you can't find one, try adding one.

4. *Audience acknowledgement builds ethos*: Add 2-3 sentences in which you *agree* with your audience or your opposition, acknowledge their concerns as valid and reasonable, or praise what steps they have already taken.

5. *It's not that simple*: Revisit a place where you've happy-go-luckily *solved a major problem* in a few sentences, as when my veterinarian says, "You *just* hold the cat's mouth open and pop the pill right in" (r-i-i-ght, easy for *her* to say). Have you written "lots of people will donate money" or "funding is available" or "families/teachers/pastors should invest more time in children/students/youth"? Be sure that you either have evidence of *how* time or money will miraculously be created out of nowhere, or at the very least several sentences indicating your sincere understanding that this will be more difficult than it may sound.

6. Think *outside of the* **Essay Box**: What might you use besides ordinary words: charts, graphs, pictures, tables? An academic essay is no place for cartoon clip-art or weird fonts, but some information works better *visually* than verbally. If you use someone else's image, of course, you'll need to cite it. Also, what about including an *Appendix*, for information that some people in your audience might want to refer to, but that would turn the main essay into an Information Dump if you tried to include it there?

7. *Organizational View, Part 1*: Put your essay aside. From memory (and hope), write down a chunk-and-paragraph outline of your essay, just a short phrase to identify each, listed in the order that makes most sense.

8. *Organizational View, Part 2*: Write a 3-5 word summary of each body paragraph in the margin next to the paragraph: what one topic or angle does that paragraph attend to? Double check: do the opening and closing sentences match your three-word summary? If you have difficulty deciding what one topic the paragraph addresses, consider splitting it. Now, compare to your outline, and make notes for *two changes* to the order of your essay.

Getting the most out of your source material

9. At one point in your essay where you have a full-sentence quotation, *add* a credibility-descriptor phrase ("John Smith, an archaeologist writing for *Science Magazine*, says,…") and *then paraphrase or cut half* of the quotation, so that you quote only the best part.

10. At *two* places in the essay, add an "*also-said*" sentence to show your audience that the supporting evidence is overwhelming: "Brown (1997, p. 3) and Black (2002) also note the shortage of money for salaries."

11. In one paragraph, look at your quotations, and try an(other) way of *integrating* one into your own sentence using a different introduction style and/or adding ellipses or bracketed info.

12. *Citation Check-in*: Change one place where you haven't cited your source but you think now that you need to. Ask Prof. Reid if needed.

13. Find *two* places to switch from a "flat" quotation-intro verb (*says, writes*) to a more active one (see the list below for examples). *Eliminate all "thinks" or "feels"* quotation-intro verbs (wishy-washy); do not use "He *quotes.*"

Thinking about smooth sentences

14. At *two* places in your essay, create a new semi-colon or colon sentence; at *one* place, create an "academic secret handshake sentence." (Independent clause**; however,** independent clause.) *Please* double-check this with a partner and/or with Prof. Reid to be sure you adding good sentences, not adding new errors!

15. Find two places where you need to add a *comma*: pay particular attention to commas after introductory clauses and having *pairs* of commas around modifying phrases (look these up in a handbook if you need to).

16. Are you a too-long sentence-writer or a too-short sentence writer? *Combine two* short sentences into one longer sentence that flows better **OR** find *two* overly-long sentences and *split* them into shorter pieces for emphasis (remember that long sentences show connections and short sentences get readers' attention).

17. Add *three transition words* to the *middles* of paragraphs to help your reader see where you're going: try "likewise," "for example," "in addition," or "on the other hand."

18. Write a quirky/funny/silly *title* for your essay; write a good engaging serious one. Consider how the two might work together: sometimes academic essays use a "hook" phrase on the left side of a *colon*, and a more extensive, serious explanation on the right side. ("It's Easier Being Green: Taking Advantage of Increased Demand for Organic Food.")

Alternative "tag phrase" verbs for introducing quotations:

Strong	Positive	Tentative	Neutral
argues	agrees that…	admits	comments
asserts	confirms that…	acknowledges	illustrates this by saying,
claims	reasons	contends	notes/reports
declares	suggests	believes	observes
insists	grants that…	implies that…	points out that…