

PEER EDITING

Be serious in reading each other's essays—anyone who thinks this is a game may leave class. However, if you leave, you will be counted absent and will not receive credit for your peer draft.

Gather in groups no smaller than five, and read each other's essays carefully, looking to strengthen the essays—write comments on the essays you read. When you finish reading, you may quietly make appropriate verbal comments to the author if such comments are necessary. Wait for someone else in your group to finish reading and exchange essays as long as you aren't getting your own essay or an essay you read earlier. You are expected to read these essays carefully, making honest, meaningful, helpful comments.

Look for a clear, well-defined thesis. Let the writer know if this or any other element of the paper isn't working, and give praise where it is due.

On the first essay you read, mark all passive verbs (be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been). Work on limiting these if your essay is returned with several passive verbs marked. Check pages 157-158 of *A Writer's Reference* for help with passive verbs. Your job as a peer reviewer is to mark these words; it is up to the writer to make changes.

Mark overused and cliché words and phrases, such as *you, your, yourself, stuff, things, in today's society*, or vague words, such as *most, many, occasionally, often, sometimes, or the majority*.

Mark *excessive* use of personal references (I, me, my, mine). A few in the essay present no problem.

Does the essay develop the announced topic, or does it drift off course?

Does each paragraph develop only one topic?

Check for excessive wordiness—times when an idea might be expressed in fewer words.

Write a brief note with an honest appraisal of the essay, but don't simply write something useless like, "It's nice" or "I liked it". **Mention what makes the essay strong or weak.** Don't be falsely flattering or intentionally cruel.

Remember that your purpose is two-fold. First, your goal is to collaborate in strengthening each essay you read. However, it is just as important to pay attention to how other writers use language. Learn from what you have read, and use your new knowledge to improve as a writer.

Sign your name **legibly** at the end of each essay you edit.

Students who are absent or fail to bring two copies of the peer draft on assigned dates will have ten points (twenty points on the research essay) deducted from their final grades. No, you are not an exception to the rule. If you didn't bring drafts, edit essays to gain from what you read.