

Narrative Peer Review

General Instructions: First, remember that a rough draft is exactly that, a rough draft. It is not supposed to be all that good yet. After all, the draft should still need some development, a reconsideration of the structure, serious editing and proofreading, etc. For that reason, before you begin responding to a rough draft, be prepared to offer constructive criticism. If your feedback consists of little more than “good job,” “that was interesting,” etc. you have 1.) ignored your responsibility as a peer reviewer and 2.) done a disservice to your classmate. In short, developing a useful peer review can be difficult work. Don’t be lazy.

Step One—Previewing

Skim through the draft and read the first sentence or so of each paragraph. Consider the title. Read the introduction and conclusion. What do you think? What events do you expect to read about when you read the entire draft? What do you expect to learn about the writer, the topic, etc?

Write down the thesis sentence:

Step Two—Enjoying

Closely read through the entire draft at a leisurely pace. What are your favorite parts of the draft? Why? What are your least favorite parts of the draft? Why? Was the draft organized the way you expected it to be from your previewing in step one?

Offer some suggestions for substantially improving the draft. Avoid commenting on specific sentence-level issues and grammatical concerns for now. Rather, think about how the author organized and developed the narrative. Were the expectations you considered during the previewing stage met? Why or why not?

Step Three—Editing

Read each sentence carefully. Make a note for each and every sentence and/or passage where you had to stop or you stumbled a bit. Provide a different way to write that sentence and/or passage. Read each sentence out loud.

Step Four—Discussion

After you are done with the first three steps, go over your review with the author. Ask questions and allow the author to ask questions of you.