

# PEER REVIEW: THEORY AND PRACTICE



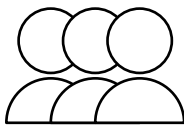
Peer review is one of a number of revision and proofreading strategies available to you. While there are many ways to structure peer review sessions, at its core, this technique involves soliciting **feedback** on one or more aspects of your writing from classmates or colleagues.



## Peer Review: Purpose and Scope

### Purpose

#### Interact



#### Models



#### Concrete Advice



#### Think & Learn



While peer review has the obvious benefit of getting feedback on your writing, it also has benefits for the person doing the reviewing:

- We become better writers by being diligent peer reviewers
- We learn good writing habits by writing often and by reading the writing of others
- Giving feedback requires us to think carefully – not only about what we think about someone’s writing, but also about how writing is constructed and why we are making specific suggestions.

### Scope

It is up to individual peer review groups to determine what aspects of writing a given session (or series of sessions) will look at. Broadly speaking, the following aspects of writing are the ones that you could potentially focus on:

- **Content:** arguments, analysis, logic, evidence
- **Structure:** organization, transitions, connections
- **Style:** tone, word choice, formality
- **Mechanics:** punctuation, sentence structure, spelling



Avoid the urge to focus initially or primarily on mechanics. The revision and proofreading process will be more effective when you focus on **higher-order concerns** (content and structure) first and **lower-order concerns** (style and mechanics) second. See our handouts on **revision** and **proofreading** for more strategies that you can use.

Done correctly, the peer review process is a social, productive, and engaging way of participating in your discipline’s community of practice. However, though some instructors or supervisors will encourage their students to work together in a peer review process, others may require that projects be completed independently. In order to avoid any issues around **academic integrity**, make sure to consult with your instructor or supervisor before engaging in peer review.

## Peer Review: Spaces

There are lots of spaces available for conducting peer review, including the following:

### Face-to-face



- Classroom
- Coffee shop
- Someone's home

### Online



- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- Google Docs
- Portal

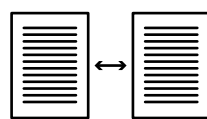
## Peer Review: Practice

### Steps in Peer Review

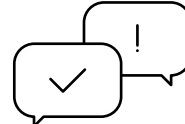
#### Explain What to Look for



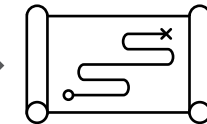
#### Exchange



#### Feedback for Improvement



#### Discuss & Plan



- 1 **Write notes** for your reviewer on the peer review sheet and exchange papers. If you are not using a peer review sheet, discuss the specific questions or concerns that you'd like your reviewer to pay attention to.
- 2 **Read actively and critically.** Make notes in the margins of the paper or in the track changes feature if using Word. If using a review sheet, make general notes there, too.
- 3 Return the paper (and the review sheet, if you used one) to the original writer; **discuss the feedback** and **create an action plan** for revision and proofreading.



### Sample Peer Review Worksheet

Feel free to adapt the template of a peer review worksheet on the following pages to suit your needs:

# PEER REVIEW MARKING SHEET

Name of Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes from the writer to the reviewer:

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Aspect of Writing Being Reviewed: Content / Structure / Style / Mechanics

Component	Needs Significant Work	Needs Some Work	Needs Little/No Work
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<b>Criteria 1</b> <i>(e.g., Clear thesis statement)</i>			
<b>Criteria 2</b> <i>(e.g., Specific topic sentences)</i>			
<b>Criteria 3</b> <i>(e.g., Use of transition words or phrases)</i>			

Additional comments on writing:

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## Post-Review Discussion

Action Plan: How will you (the writer) incorporate the suggestions of your reviewer into your edits? What steps will you take during the editing process? Be specific:

1.

2.

3.