

PEER REVIEW: THEORY AND PRACTICE



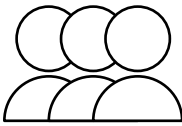
Peer review is one of a number of revision and proofreading strategies available to you. While there are many ways to structure peer review sessions, at its core, this technique involves soliciting **feedback** on one or more aspects of your writing from classmates or colleagues.



Peer Review: Purpose and Scope

Purpose

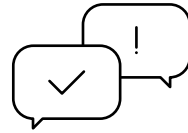
Interact



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

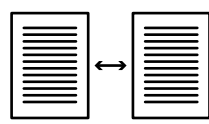
Peer Review: Practice

Steps in Peer Review

Explain What to Look for



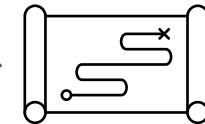
Exchange



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:

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

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

Additional comments on writing:

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.