

MEMORANDUM

To: English 112 students
From: Dr. Newmark
Subject: Final Paper Peer Review Memo Guidelines

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with instructions for writing a responsive memo to your peer in which you will provide him/her with suggestions for a revision of the final research paper. This memo will provide you with guidelines for your review of your peer's paper.

“Global” Comments

Please begin by reading your peer's essay. Then, please re-read the assignment, posted on our website (projected on the screen in class), and read the grading rubric. With this information in mind, read the essay again slowly. In a memorandum, **formatted** like this one, please summarize for your peer aspects of the paper that might be improved, aspects that are “global” in that they pertain to the essay as a whole. Questions you might ask yourself while reading are:

- Does your peer actually follow the assignment instructions?
- Does your peer offer a clear and developed first paragraph with background information?
- Does your peer summarize the issue that he or she is addressing (related directly to an issue drawn from the larger topics of family, education, and environment) and some of its critical components?
- Does your peer offer a thesis that is a **proposal argument**? What is it and how might it be improved?
- What is your overall impression of your peer's paper? What were the paper's problems/strengths?
- Does the paper do what it sets out to do?
- How does the paper “read”? Casually (using “I” or “you”)? Choppily? Boring-ly? Confusingly?
- Does your peer offer anything new in the paper? Any new ideas, insights, questions, conclusions?
- What is the overall tone of the paper? Casual? Arrogant? Hostile? Helpful?
- After you've read the paper twice, are you struck by your peer's proposal's **feasibility or impossibility**? Or is the proposal somewhere in between?
- Does your peer attend to the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why)?

Based on questions like the ones above, offer your peer **several paragraphs** of comments and suggestions. Please write as clearly and in as much detail as you can, so that after reading your “global” comments, your peer will have a solid idea of how to improve the paper.

“Local” Comments

During a final reading of your peer's essay, please feel free to write on your peer's paper, giving your peer suggestions for improvements and marking spelling and punctuation errors.

In another section of your memorandum, entitled “Local Comments,” please give your peer some feedback on sentence-level problems in the paper. These include grammar mistakes, punctuation mistakes, run-on and incomplete sentences, etc. Does your peer seem to have perpetual trouble with the same problems? Do you have advice for him/her on how to fix them? Some other question you might consider in this section are:

- Are your peer's sentence structures interesting? Or are most sentences structured the same way?
- Does your peer introduce all sources (the two course texts and the four “scholarly” texts)?
- Does your peer carefully follow citation guidelines in the in-text citations as well as in the Works Cited?
- What seem to be your peer's most common problems on the sentence level?
- Do ideas flow together, and develop logically, from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph?

So, your memo will have two primary sections, detailed above. You can also conclude with “General Summary” section if you wish. Be sure to take this exercise seriously and do a thorough job on your memo. Use the above information as a guideline and be sure to read the rubric and the assignment again before you begin.