

KU Writing Center

Descriptive Peer Response

- Descriptive, rather than evaluative, response is usually more helpful to the writer.
- Choose one of the methods below to respond to your peer's draft.
- "Point" to the location of your comment in the draft using 1, 2, 3...
- On a separate piece of paper, after each index number, write your comments in full.

Pointing

Which words or passages somehow strike you? Stick in mind? Get through?

Center of gravity

Which section or sections seem important? Resonant? Generative?

Summary

Write a title or one-sentence description of the paper's message.

Sayback

Using the phrase *Are you saying...?*, invite the writer to restate or elaborate on a point.

Reply

Write what your thoughts are on this topic.

Voice

Tell the writer what sort of voice(s) you hear in the paper. What kind of person does the writer sound like? Timid? Confident? Sarcastic? Do you trust the voice of this person?

Movies in the reader's mind

Write in detail what you "see" and "expect" at crucial points in the paper. Make "I" statements such as "I felt confused here when I read..." or "I started thinking about X when I read..." Be careful not to write the movie *review*!

Metaphorical descriptions

Compare this piece of writing to another object, such as the weather, a meal, an item of clothing, an animal, a color, etc.

Believing...and doubting

Try to believe what the writer has written, even if you really disagree. Be his/her ally, offering more evidence, more arguments, more ideas to make his/her case. Or try to doubt everything the writer has written. Pretend to be his/her enemy, finding all the arguments that can be made against his/her case.

Skeleton feedback

List the writer's main points, subpoints, supporting evidence, and assumptions about his/her topic and audience.

Descriptive outline

Write "says" and "does" sentences for each paragraph of the paper. A "says" sentence summarizes the message, and a "does" sentence describes the function, or what the paragraph is trying to accomplish in light of the whole paper.

Oral Peer Response



It goes without saying that the most important thing to remember during group work is to provide relevant, useful feedback in a respectful, thoughtful manner.

Group response exercise:

Taking turns, each person in the group will have the opportunity to receive and provide feedback:

1. Decide which writer in your group will read first. You may also want to select a time-keeper and scribe to take notes at this time as well.
2. *Writer*, start by sharing with your group at least two areas in your paper about which you would like feedback.
3. Then, read your paper aloud to your group. Avoid the temptation to ad lib, reading only what is printed or written on your paper. If you feel compelled to provide further explanation concerning a specific topic in your paper, make note of this as it is a good indicator that you need to include more detail in your paper. *Peers*, take notes during the reading so that you can remember areas of interest or concern and allow the writer to finish reading before making comments.
4. When the writer finishes reading his or her paper, take turns sharing feedback, focusing primarily on the writer's ideas and arguments and the clarity and creativity with which he or she presents them. *Writer*, you are welcome to ask follow-up questions of your peers; just remember to keep these conversations short in order to allow time for everyone to fully participate, and, if you are unsure as to how to respond to peer's comments, a simple "thank-you" will suffice.
5. Repeat this process until everyone has had a chance to share work and receive feedback.

Ideas for providing feedback to fellow writers:

- ❖ Briefly summarize what you believe to be the writer's main argument or idea. *Writer*, feel free to ask questions if your group is unable to articulate this to your satisfaction, as this can help you understand precisely what areas of your essay are not as clearly formed as you intended.
- ❖ What areas or ideas did you like and why? *Writer*, once you know what works, you can incorporate more of it in this and other assignments.
- ❖ Were there any parts that you as a reader did not understand?
- ❖ Did the writer include both *what* he or she thinks and *why* he or she thinks that?
- ❖ Did the writer meet fully all the requirements of the assignment?

Courtesy of the UMKC Writing Center

Writer's name _____

➤ General areas for readers to keep in mind:

- Does the paper adhere to specific instructions on format?
- Does the paper follow appropriate citation and documentation styles?
- Does the paper engage the reader's attention?
- Does the paper accomplish its objective?

What are the specific areas of your paper that you want your reader to look at?

Dear reader:

1. Please tell me what you think about the _____
2. What could I do to improve the _____
- 3.
- 4.

Your peer reviewer should know this is draft # _____

Your peer reviewer should know if you want them to write on your paper, with remarks and editing symbols, or if you would rather they did not do that at this time.

(On the back of the sheet is space for feedback for the writer.)