

Peer Review Strategies (Instructors)



Soliciting and receiving feedback on writing is a normal part of the writing process and models the collaborative work that takes place in academic and professional settings. All writers—emerging to advanced—can benefit from sharing their writing with careful, supportive readers. This handout offers practical strategies and a sample checklist to help you participate in the peer review process. However, always tailor your work to your specific audience and assignment.

Setting Up Peer Review (for instructors)

The success of the peer review process begins with the structure, logistics, and instruction provided:

- **Select an appropriate peer review format.** Consider the writing assignment timeline, your class schedule and structure, and the needs of your students as you select a peer review format. Will students exchange papers with a partner or work in a small group to provide feedback on several papers? Will reviewers complete a worksheet, write a response letter, comment in the margins, or offer verbal feedback? Will students exchange papers online or bring hard copies? Will peer review responses be submitted to both the instructor and the writer?
- **Make it matter.** Students are more likely to engage fully in the peer review process when the instructor openly values the process and if grades or another form of accountability or assessment is involved. Consider sharing your own experience with peer review and making both the reviewer and the writer accountable for their part of the peer review process.
- **Provide adequate time.** Make sure the final due date is scheduled far enough apart from the peer review to allow for revisions. If conducting peer review during class, plan on the process taking the majority of the class period.
- **Define roles and expectations.** Reviewing a paper may be a new concept to some students, so explain the role of a peer reviewer and your expectations for the process. Remind students they are offering suggestions rather than grading or editing another's work. Explain to writers how to receive feedback and incorporate suggestions into their revisions. If applicable consider providing students with the Research & Writing Center's "Peer Review Strategies" handout for reviewers and writers.
- **Focus the feedback.** Peer reviewers need direction on what to look for or review in each other's work. Do you want them to comment on content, organization, format, or sentence-level concerns? Select a few areas for them to focus on, and clearly outline your expectations. You may also choose to use or adapt the Research & Writing Center's "Peer Review Checklist" handout.
- **Model.** Before asking students to review each other's work, model the process, highlight useful techniques or language, and role play or provide sample responses.
- **Observe and provide guidance.** If peer review takes place in class, be available for questions, observe the process, and guide the work as needed.
- **Assess and revise the process.** At the end of the peer review process, reflect on what worked well and what adjustments will need to be made to make the process more effective.