

A Few Guidelines for Peer Editing:

Working in groups is often hard at first, mostly because students are reluctant to comment on each others work, not wanting to say that anything is "wrong" with a paper, not feeling qualified to "judge" another's work. But the point of peer editing is not to tell anyone what is "wrong"--you are merely acting as an interested reader who wants to learn as much as possible from your essay. So your job is to ask questions and make comments and offer the kind of feedback that you yourself would find interesting.

Giving good feedback means making comments that really could help the writer with his or her next revision. Saying that the paper is good, or "okay," in order to avoid hurting someone's feelings is a bad idea. So is picking up too much on surface errors like punctuation, capitalization, word choice. That comes later.

A Few Ground Rules:

FIRST OF ALL, NO APOLOGIZING! Everyone gets a little nervous when first showing written work to others, but remember that all drafts are works in progress and therefore there is no need to apologize for anything that is written in a draft.

Pay attention to what the other writer is saying, just as you hope he or she will pay attention to what you are saying. Look at content above everything else.

Don't argue about ideas that are expressed within the paper--your role is not to agree or disagree, but to help that writer express the ideas clearly and effectively.

Don't waste time on surface errors in parts of the draft that may ultimately be cut--try to always look at the Big Picture: the overall effectiveness of the essay.

ASK and COMMENT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- *What is especially interesting or effective about this draft? After reading it, what do you most clearly remember about it?
- *What seems to be the central idea or purpose of this essay? Any suggestions for improvement?
- *How well does the draft seem to address its intended audience? Any suggestions for improvement?
- *Comment on the opening paragraph. Suggestions?
- *Comment on the organization of the draft? How well unified is it? Suggestions?
- *Are there places in the draft that need additional details or examples?
- *Is the argument in this draft clear and convincing? Does each paragraph contribute to the overall effectiveness of the draft? How might the argument be made more effective?
- *Can you suggest parts of this draft which might be cut from the final draft?
- *Comment on the conclusion of the draft. Suggestions?