

GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEWERS
Manifesto Preparation Draft
MMW 121, Fall 2016

Commenting effectively takes time, so plan to spend **at least one hour per rough draft**. As you read each paper, pay close attention to its structure, strength of evidence, completeness of argument (so far), and overall coherence. Write your comments in the margins as you read; you might not remember your impressions if you don't record them right away. When you comment, please do the following:

Introduction:

Comment on the *context* that the author provides.

Comment on the *problem/issue* identified by the author. Mark it with a "P" or "I" in the margin. Do you know what led the author to make the *declaration statement* and propose *the action plan* below?

Find the *declaration (thesis) statement*. Double underline it. Comment on whether or not the declaration statement address the problem/issue the author has posed.

Note where the declaration statement is *located*. Comment on whether its placement makes it easy to identify or whether it is buried in the middle of a paragraph.

Note how the author *words* the declaration statement. Comment on whether or not the wording makes it easy for you to tell that this is the declaration/thesis of the argument below.

Does the introduction tell you why you might want to read the paper? If not, comment on what the author could add or change that would make the paper more inviting.

Alternative hypotheses and/or counter-arguments and/or counter-evidence:

Find the *counterargument(s)*. Mark it/them with "CA." Mark *alternative hypotheses* with "AH" or *counter-evidence* as "CE."

Comment on the *appropriateness* of the counterargument. Does it address the same question as does the declaration/thesis? Does it (as it should) propose a different approach to the problem/issue, or a different interpretation of a piece of evidence?

Action Plan:

Mark each step in the action plan with "AP."

Does the action plan provide a solution to the problem/issue identified above with methods for achieving transformation and living more fully human?

Does it support the declaration/thesis?

Sources:

Mark the use of one or more in-class sources with “S” in the margin.

Does the author use at least one in-class source (s) effectively to make the argument? If so, explain how. If not, offer suggestions for how to use the source more effectively or suggest different in-class sources to consider.

Mark the use of one or more outside scholarly sources with “SS” in the margin.

Does the author use at least one outside scholarly (peer-reviewed) secondary source as evidence of the problem or to support the suggested action plan? If so, explain. If not, describe the problem with how the author used the source.

Body paragraphs:

Find the **topic sentence** of each paragraph. Underline it.

Note whether each topic sentence is **relevant** to the declaration/thesis and/or to a counterargument. Mark any that seem irrelevant.

Do all of the sentences in each paragraph **relate** to that paragraph’s topic sentence? Mark any sentences that seem to be out of place.

Can you follow the **logical development** of the author’s main claims? Mark any place where you seem to lose the thread of the argument. Mark any place where the argument gets repetitive.

Look at the **transitions**. Does the beginning of each paragraph follow logically from the end of the previous one? Mark an especially effective transition.

Mark a transition that you think needs to be revised (if there is one). Suggest, if you can, a way to make that transition work.

The argument as a whole:

Does the author provide **evidence** in support of both the declaration/thesis and the counterargument(s)? Mark any points that seem to require more evidence.

Is each piece of evidence **relevant** to the thesis or a counterargument? Mark any that are not.

Does the author **explain the relevance** of the evidence to his/her argument?

Point out where the evidence is explained particularly effectively. Mark the places where you believe that more explanation would strengthen or clarify the argument.

Does the author **acknowledge the sources** of his or her information? Mark any places in the paper where you are unsure of whether the idea comes from the author or from a source.

Does the author use **correct citation format**? Does the author use quotation marks appropriately? Whenever you see a parenthetical citation, can you tell how much of the material preceding the citation comes from the source?

Overall, do you find the argument **persuasive**? Comment on how well the author rebuts the alternative hypothesis and argues in support of the thesis.

Order:

Does the order of the argument, as laid out by the author, make sense? Is it the most effective order? If so explain why. If not, can you make a suggestion that would help you, the reader?

Conclusion:

Comment on how well the conclusion meets these conventional criteria:

It does not introduce new evidence.

It sums up the argument of the paper.

It goes beyond recapitulating the introduction (e.g., it comments in an interesting way on the implications or significance of the manifesto on positive change (personal, interpersonal, or community – see prompt).

It leaves readers with a last thought or reflection on the topic.

Overall comments:

What did you like best about this paper? (This can be a long list.)

What do you think is the single most important revision the author can make?