

## COLLEGE ESSAY PEER REVIEW

Some people are just uncomfortable showing others their writing. That's understandable, but it should not prevent you from taking advantage of the opportunity peer review represents. Writing is communication, after all. Lots of different people, with different skill levels, interests, attitudes and so on, will read what you've written. Getting feedback from several different readers greatly enhances your ability to reach a wide audience, because it shows you the expectations and assumptions your readers bring to your writing and helps you reach them. - *Davis Oldham*

**Think of this as an opportunity to get to know someone better. Just as the admissions officer (or HR representative) does not know you, your peer will also have an unfamiliar eye when reading your essay. This will make their feedback invaluable compared to those who already know your story!**

### Step 1 (10 min):

Read *Why peer review?* by *Davis Oldham*

### Step 2-4 (15 min):

You will need a copy of one of your college essays. You can either print it (feel free to use the classroom printer) or have it pulled up on your laptop.

Find a partner. If there is an odd number of classmates, there can be groups of 3. You will be exchanging your essay with this person and reviewing theirs. They will give you feedback on your essay.

Find a space in either the classroom, in front of the library, or on the terrace to work with your partner/small group.

### Step 5: (40 min)

Taking your essay, this peer review packet, and a pencil/pen complete the following Peer Review Workshop process. Please keep in mind the article you read at the start of class:

- Take a few minutes and read your partners essay. While reading, answer the questions listed on the first page. Write your thoughts and impressions legibly as you will give this page to the author at the end of the class.
- Once you are both finished reading/completed the peer review worksheet, decide whose essay you will review first.
- The reviewer should share their thoughts/impressions/answers to questions on page one. The author should feel free to ask questions seeking suggestions or clarification.
- Switch and have a conversation about the second essay.
  - If a group of three, continue until everyone has gotten feedback/given feedback.
- Tear off the first page and give it to your partner so they can incorporate your feedback into their essay.

### Step 6 (10 min):

Once you have reviewed each essay, head back to the classroom and on your own complete the Self-Assessment on the second page (front and back) of the packet. You will have time in class on Friday and Monday (10/4 and 10/7) to incorporate this feedback and edit your essay. You will complete this Peer Review Workshop again on Tuesday and Thursday (10/8 and 10/10).

**College Essay Peer Editing**

**USE THIS FORM FOR YOUR PARTNERS ESSAY**

*Credit: Montgomery County Schools, Sterling KY*

1. Does the introduction set a compelling and/or interesting tone and establish the voice of the speaker?
  
2. Are there smooth transitions/clever links between the ideas mentioned? Between sentences?
  
3. Does the writer's personality come through? Do we know what the speaker cares about? Do we get a sense of "who he or she is"?
  
4. Is it organized? Is there a clear follow through on the central idea?
  
5. Are the details and examples specific—do they truly allow you to see, hear, smell, touch, taste (picture) the subject?
  
6. Does the conclusion of the essay give you a sigh of appreciation, a sense of closer or completion, an "ah-ha" feeling?
  
7. What errors exist—grammatically and/or stylistically—does the syntax enhance the topic? Are the sentences varied?
  
8. What are the strengths of this essay?
  
9. What needs the most improvement? What recommendations would you give to the writer before his/her next revision?

**USE THIS FORM FOR YOUR ESSAY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**College Essay Final Draft Self-Assessment**

	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not at All
1. My opening hooks the reader.	_____	_____	_____
2. By the end of the introduction, the reader knows the focus/main idea of my essay.	_____	_____	_____
3. My introduction sets a compelling and/or interesting tone and clearly establishes my voice as a speaker.	_____	_____	_____
4. I have smooth transitions/clever links between the ideas I mention and between sentences.	_____	_____	_____
5. There is a smooth shift from the narrative/opening idea and the “leap.”	_____	_____	_____
6. My personality comes through. The reader can tell what I care about. The reader gets a sense of who I am and can visualize me.	_____	_____	_____
7. My subject and presentation of the ideas in my essay are interesting/fresh/original.	_____	_____	_____
8. My essay is organized and has a clear follow-through on the central idea.	_____	_____	_____
9. The details and examples are specific; they truly allow my reader to see, hear, smell, touch, taste (picture) the subject.	_____	_____	_____
10. The conclusion of my essay gives the reader a sigh of appreciation, a sense of closure or completion, an “ah-ha” feeling.	_____	_____	_____
11. My essay is strong grammatically and stylistically. My sentences are varied and syntax enhances the essay.	_____	_____	_____
12. This essay represents my best, most polished work.	_____	_____	_____

(OVER)

Comments about your essay and your process/progress on it:

What still needs work, if anything?

Is this essay ready to send and/or have you sent it out yet? (Elaborate).