

Peer Review: Mini-Checklist for Commenting

Use this mini-checklist as an aid for commenting your partner's paper.

Positive Comments:

- Word choice
 - Correct use of disciplinary terms
 - Clear use of language so that meaning is always obvious rather than confused
 - Tone remains consistent
- Organization
 - Logic builds nicely and without gaps
 - Each paragraph maintains a clear focus
 - This paragraph contains more than one idea – try to break it down; consider what idea controls the topic sentence and focus on illustrating that
 - Quotes are integrated effectively/ if not suggest what is needed to improve it – use the sandwich model as a guide as well as tips on integrating quotes
 - What question does this paragraph answer?
 - What method of paragraph development is being used here?
 - Add more examples/details to give enough depth to the topic of this paragraph
- Logical progression
 - Uses constant, linear, split theme effectively
 - Paragraphs build on each other to carry the theme forward
 - Consider using more sentence variety to increase flow
 - Perhaps more lexical chains could be used to bring out the central argument in this paragraph, e.g. repeating key words and using synonyms and related words
 - Good use of meta-text (e.g. transitional phrases or paragraphs) from section to section
- Sentence structure
 - Subject is always clear
 - No awkward verb tenses
 - No overuse of passive voice or “to be” verb
 - Neither too wordy and complex, nor too short and abrupt
 - Good variety of sentences – used effectively
 - Try to cut down on nominalizations
- Opening and closing sentences (of paragraphs or sections)
 - Opening sentence is not vague or contestable
 - Subject of the paragraph is clearly set in the first sentence
 - Closing sentence achieves—whether in function or in summary—the purpose of the paragraph, resulting in an argument that is clearly and concisely stated
 - In body paragraphs, last line allows for a smooth transition into the following paragraph

• **Suggestions**

Introduction: Includes five parts, i.e., background, unknown/problem, question/purpose, experimental approach, closing off

Order: Offer more variety in sentences / argument style

Ideas: Draw attention to ideas not considered

Information omitted: Specify any details left out

Lack of development: Identify concepts not clearly defined or fully developed

Opposing opinions: Ask questions about opposing viewpoints and suggest addressing them

Whose voice: See the academic phrasebank for help in sorting your voice from that of others

Style: Suggest possible alternative words for overall precision and clarity. Pinpoint cumbersome phrasing (or places where the wording is colloquial) and offer a solution