

Writing and the Environment

Guidelines for comments and workshop discussions:

Following these two paragraphs, you will find a set of questions to consider. Read both of your partners' essays with these questions in mind. Then, focus on the essay that you must discuss in writing. Use each question as the point of departure for a thoughtful comment on your partner's essay. The finished comments should be at least two pages long (double-spaced). When you are satisfied with what you have written, print out two copies (one for me and one for the original writer).

Remember that your comments are intended to help the writer create a more compelling version of his or her essay. Be tactful and complete. I have not asked you to comment on the writer's grammatical or mechanical errors. I will take care of those problems myself. Thank you in advance for writing thoughtful comments on your partner's essay.

Questions for Essay Two

SPECIFICS:

1. Does the introduction engage your interest?
2. What is the central issue or problem discussed in this essay? Does the writer make clear why this issue matters?
3. Does the writer provide sufficient background information and explanation?
4. What is the writer's principal argument? Does it emerge clearly in the essay?
5. Does each article mentioned in the essay play a clear role in the overall argument?
6. Did you learn enough about each article to enable you to follow the essay writer's analysis?
7. How well does the writer handle evidence from the articles? Is there enough supporting evidence?
8. How effective is the writer's conclusion? What changes or additions might you suggest?
9. Does the introduction point the reader in the right direction? Would you suggest any additions to the introduction?

OVERVIEW:

10. What new insights did you take from your reading of this essay?
11. What would you say are the essay's major strengths and why?
12. What do you think the writer needs to focus on when he or she begins revising this essay?
13. Does the writer's prose serve him or her well? Do you have any general suggestions for next version?
14. Do the essay writer's priorities shape the entire essay?
15. Should the essay writer consider changing the sequence of the articles treated in the essay?

Reminders for next version:

1. Identify your writers in the body of your essay. If this information is not provided at the beginning or end of the article, you should be able to find something on the web. Let us know whether the article's author is an expert in the field, a legislator, an investigative reporter, a researcher with a pronounced political outlook, etc. Let us know something about the publication in which the article appeared. This kind of information will help you and your readers make sense of the ideas and evidence presented in the articles.
2. Most of you are dealing with on-line sources. If the source is available in "Page Image," you will be able to see the original pagination. In that case, your parenthetical citations should include the original page numbers. Ordinarily, if the on-line source is not paginated, you may omit page numbers from your parenthetical citations. In this essay, I want you to provide information that will help readers locate your references. After the author's name, put "3 of 9" or "2 of 10." In other words, indicate the page location within the total number of pages of the printed-out article.
3. Some of you are writing on issues that touch upon topics considered in our common reading. Use the expertise of these writers to help you explain processes that are treated too briefly in your own articles.
4. Remember to include a list of "Works Cited" at the end of your essay. Without such a list, your readers have no way of locating the sources that you mention in your essay. See guidelines for "Works Cited" in Writing Worth Reading, pp. 380-394.

5. Use the MLA in-text citation system. Find for this system in Writing Worth Reading, pp. 394-400 and in the Mayfield Handbook.