

A PEER REVIEW GUIDE

A Well-Presented Subject

How effectively does the writer present the subject?

Summarize: Tell the writer what you understand the subject to be and why he or she thinks it is important and worth analyzing.

Praise: Give an example of something in the draft that you think will especially interest the intended readers and help them understand the subject.

Critique: Tell the writer if you have any confusion or uncertainty about the subject. What further explanation, examples, or statistics do you need to understand it better? If you can think of a more interesting way to present the subject, share your ideas with the writer.

A Well-Supported Causal Analysis

How plausible are the proposed causes or effects, and how well does the writer support the causal analysis?

Summary: Identify the possible causes or effects the writer argues are the most plausible and interesting.

Praise: Tell the writer which cause or effect seems most convincing. Point to any support (such as a particular example, a statistic, a research study, or a graph) that you think is especially strong.

Critique: Tell the writer if any of the causes or effects seem too obvious or minor, and if you think an important cause or effect has been left out. Where the support seems lacking or unconvincing, explain what is missing or seems wrong. If the reasoning seems flawed, what makes you think so?

An Effective Response to Objections and Alternative Causes or Effects

How effectively does the writer respond to readers' objections and alternative causes or effects?

Summary: Identify the objections or alternative causes or effects to which the writer responds.

Praise: Point out any response you think is especially effective, and tell the writer what makes you think so. For example, indicate where the support is especially credible and convincing.

Critique: Point to any objections or alternative causes or effects that the writer could have responded to more effectively, and suggest how the response could be improved. Also indicate if the writer has overlooked any serious objections.

A Clear, Logical Organization

How clear and logical is the causal analysis?

Summary: Underline the thesis statement and topic sentences.

Praise: Give an example of where the essay succeeds in being especially clear and easy to follow — for example, in its overall organization, its use of key terms and transitions, or its use of visuals.

Critique: Point to any passages where the writing could be clearer, where topic sentences or transitions could be added, or where key terms could be repeated to make the essay easier to follow. Try suggesting a better beginning or a more effective ending.