

A PEER REVIEW GUIDE

A Clear, Arguable Thesis

How well does the writer present the thesis?

Summarize: Tell the writer what you understand the essay's thesis to be and what its key terms are.

Praise: Tell the writer what seems most interesting to you about his or her main claim about the story, whether you agree with it or not.

Critique: If you cannot find the thesis statement or cannot identify the key terms, let the writer know. Evaluate the thesis statement on the basis of whether

- it makes an interesting and arguable assertion (rather than making a statement of fact or an obvious point)
- it is clear and precise (neither ambiguous nor vague)
- it is appropriately qualified (neither overgeneralized nor exaggerated)

A Well-Supported Argument

How well does the writer develop and support the argument?

Summarize: Underline the thesis statement and the major support for it. (Often, the major support appears in the topic sentences of paragraphs.)

Praise: Give an example in the essay where support for a reason is presented especially effectively — for instance, note where brief quotations (words and short phrases), a longer quotation, or summaries of particular events are introduced and explained in a way that clearly illustrates a particular point that is being argued.

Critique: Tell the writer where the connection between a reason and its support seems vague, where too much plot is being relayed with no apparent point, or where a quotation is left to speak for itself without explanation. Let the writer know if any part of the argument seems to be undeveloped or does not support the thesis.

A Clear, Logical Organization

Has the writer clearly and logically organized the argument?

Summarize: Underline the sentence(s) in which the writer forecasts supporting reasons, and circle transitions or repeated key words and phrases.

Praise: Give an example of something that makes the essay especially easy to read — where, for example, the key terms introduced in the thesis recur throughout the essay in topic sentences and elsewhere, or where transitions are used logically.

Critique: Tell the writer where readability could be improved. For example, point to places where key terms could be added or where a topic sentence could be made clearer, indicate where the use of transitions might be improved, or note where transitions are lacking and could be added.