

University of Houston Clear Lake

WRITING CENTER

Peer Reviewing Tips

Peer-reviewing for a piece of writing with a partner can help you create a better essay even from the start of the writing process. The tutors in the Writing Center are trained to help you with your writing; however, you may also wish to peer review with classmates or friends. If you do, train them to be efficient support by understanding the role and responsibility of each participant.

General Instructions

- Schedule a meeting of about 15-20 minutes
- Come to the meeting with a plan, but not one that is "cast in stone"
- Be flexible. You will probably need to make some changes in the plan as you go along
- Keep a record of the information discussed by taping the session or taking notes

The Writer's Job

The writer must set the agenda and goals for the session by explaining what kind of help is needed (Planning, outlining, reviewing, etc.). Come to the session prepared to talk. Try to accomplish the following:

- Determine the purpose of the piece
- Convey key points
- Define the audience
- Predict the reader's response
- Think through the writing conventions expected in the field
- Raise problems
- Talk over alternatives

The Partner's Job

The partner, or tutor, should act as more than a prompt by raising real issues. At the same time, the partner's job is to help the writer achieve his/her stated goals, not push the partner's own agenda. As a partner, you can help the writer clarify, plan, and anticipate problems by doing the following:

- Reflect back what the writer has said
- Ask questions for clarification
- Listen for possible gaps in the argument
- Suggest alternative methods and goals if needed
- Warn of potential negative responses

Information taken from Linda Flower's *Problem Solving Strategies for Writing*, 4th ed. N. Y.: Harcourt, 1993.