

Writing and the Environment

Guidelines for comments and workshop discussions:

On the next page, you will find a set of questions to consider. Once again, you should use each question as the point of departure for a thoughtful comment on the essay in front of you. It is not sufficient to write the question number and yes or no. The finished comments should be at least one and half 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.

In addition to writing extensive comments on one essay, you should write a brief, but thoughtful assessment of the other essay in your group. The brief assessment should be roughly one half page long (double-spaced).

Reminder concerning your "extensive" written comments:

I have provided a list of questions to consider in your comments. You may treat these questions in a different order, and you may group them into coherent units, but you may not simply overlook the specific questions. Note that the completed comments should be at least one and a half pages long (double-spaced).

Reminder concerning the next version of your essay:

Identify your key sources in the body of your essay. Let us know whether the work you cite is written by an expert in the field or by an activist with a pronounced political outlook (or both). Your comments leading up to and following a quote should help your readers assess its relevance and value.

Questions for Essay Three

1. Does the introduction engage your interest?
2. Does the introduction point the reader in the right direction? Would you suggest any additions to the introduction?
3. What is the central issue or problem discussed in this essay? Does the writer make clear why this issue matters?
4. Does the writer provide sufficient background information? What more would you like to know?
5. Does the overall sequence of points within the essay seem logical? Would you suggest any changes in that sequence?
6. Are there places in the essay where you felt the need for more extensive explanation?
7. Does the writer provide the right amount of technical information?
8. Does the writer supply sufficient evidence in the form of data and quotes to substantiate the main points of the essay? Can you point to places where the writer might add evidence?
9. Does the writer make effective use of examples? Are there too many or too few?
10. How effective is the writer's conclusion? What changes or additions might you suggest?

OVERVIEW:

11. Summarize in a couple of sentences what you learned from this essay. (This will help the writer assess the effectiveness of the essay as a whole.)
12. What would you say are the essay's major strengths and why?
13. What do you think the writer needs to focus on when he or she begins revising this essay?
14. Does the writer's prose serve him or her well? Do you have any general suggestions for the next version?