

Critique Template

Introduction

- Has the writer a thesis statement?
- Does the writer provide an adequate overview of the field?
- Are unfamiliar words defined? (perhaps in medial modifier form—see below)

Body

- Does each paragraph have an obvious topic?
- Are the various points arranged in a logical order?
- Does one point lead naturally into another (are sophisticated transitions provided?)
- Is any material quoted that should be paraphrased?
- Are quotes explained or commented on, or just presented as self-evident?
- Are there points that need further development or elaboration?
- Are there points that are self-evident (or not terribly significant)?

Conclusion

- Does the writer pull together the various points into an information-packed, paragraph?
- Does the conclusion relate to the thesis?

Style

Diction (word choice)

- Circle and count the number of "to be" verbs (is, am, was, were, are)
- Could any sentences containing "to be" verbs be rewritten using the initial, medial, or final modifier scheme below?
- Is word choice appropriate or too casual?
- Box in words you would change. Write the suggestion above.
- Are more specific or general words used?
- Are there unnecessary words? Omit them.

Syntax (sentence structure)

- Are the sentence beginnings varied? Circle the first word(s) of each sentence. Does the same word occur several times ("The")?
- Does each sentence begin with the same part of speech?
- Are the sentences varied in length?

Editing

- Use computer "Tools" (spell and grammar check)
- Punctuation (note that comma splice errors are common)
- Usage (singular noun, plural pronoun--antecedent disagreement)

Modifiers (see syntax section)

Initial modifiers

Cautiously tiptoeing across the floor, Susan practiced what she would say to Mr. Gruenschnott.

Providing a stable economy for all of Europe, Great Britain now leads the way in innovative financial mergers.

Medial modifiers

Mr. Jones, a cantankerous old butcher, chased the kids out of his shop.

William Perry's moral development theory, consisting of four distinct stages, lacks sufficient development.

Final modifiers

They walked along the beach, arms linked, heads touching, their hearts beating in time.

Lighthouses dot the coastline, a meandering series of granite and shale curves.

The four types of transformations in transformational grammar--addition, deletion, movement, and substitution--also reflect types of revision that exist at the word, phrase, sentence, and chunk level.