

Checklist for Editing and Peer Reviewing a Paper

When you edit your own paper or review someone else's paper, you need to read it as any reader would. Ask yourself if the essay would be understandable to another student at this level who is interested in the topic but not enrolled in the course? I am more interested to see how students in a particular course write essays that might be interesting to people outside the course. Don't think a student is asked to write a particular essay for the professor, and don't assume that the reader will have seen the same films or read the same books as you. I am trying to see how students might write about social and cultural issues after taking the course.

Reviewing a paper:

Pay attention to the following issues as you review the paper. Underlined words are discussed in the *Skidmore Guide to Writing*.

1. Read the title.

Does the title clearly reflect the thesis statement or main point of the paper?

2. Read the opening paragraph.

Is the thesis statement of this paper clearly expressed? Where is it? (Remember that the "thesis statement" is also called a "main idea," "main argument," or "focus" of the paper).

After you read the first paragraph, stop for a moment. As a reader, what do you expect from the rest of the paper?

3. Read each paragraph carefully.

As you read each paragraph, ask yourself what the paragraph is about. Is one idea fully developed? Is this expressed in a topic sentence?

Does the paragraph contain concrete evidence from course materials to support that idea (or assertion)? How does the paragraph relate to the main point of the whole essay?

Does the paper need transitions anywhere?

4. Look for coherence.

Within each paragraph, sentences should follow one another logically.

5. Look for clarity and correctness.

Does each word -- especially a key word -- mean what you think it should mean? Are the sentences structured so that subjects and verbs are close to each other? Has the writer chosen strong nouns and verbs to convey his or her meaning?

Does the paper pay attention to issues of style and clarity?

Is the writer writing actively and avoiding overuse of the passive voice?

6. Read the conclusion.

Does the essay have a strong and interesting conclusion?

7. Include a References Cited list.

You *must* use the American Anthropological Association (AAA) style for citing sources in the text and the References Cited list. (See the Anthropology web site for more details.)

Resources:

The Skidmore Guide to Writing: <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/english/ENGLISH_DEPT_HP/WG/WGFRAMES.html>

Skidmore's Writing Center, Ladd Hall, Room 320 (Tel. 4331): <<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/english/WritingCenter/Index.htm>>

Writing Resources in Anthropology (Including information on **How to cite sources in anthropology**): <<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/anthropology/writing.html>>