Peer Critique Sheet: The Body of the Formal Report

INTRODUCTION

1. Underline the text’s **thesis.** Discuss its visibility and clarity. Note whether or not you feel it is in the right place and whether or not it contains both parts of an argumentative thesis formula (topic and the assertion/position).

2. Review the report’s **background** information. In text, call out the reporter’s questions (excluding the “why,” which is the text’s thesis) and note if the author must include any of these foundation details *or* over-discusses these details. Discuss the author’s use of textual/researched evidence: is there enough? Too much? Does the author provide clear citations?

3. Discuss the background’s **length and establishment of scope.** Compare the background’s length to the discussion section’s length. The background should be shorter, but contain dense material. Based on the discussion and recommendation/conclusion sections, does the background contain relevant information and enough content for the argument? After reading the background section, will readers clearly understand the argument’s scope, or the “boundaries” of the argument’s focus? Be as explicit as possible.

4. Review the author’s use of **subheadings.** Are there too many? Too few? Flag places where the introduction may need additional or less subheadings. Discuss the subheading’s formatting and the author’s employment of highlighting techniques throughout the background’s section.

DISCUSSION

1. Review the text’s **analysis** subsection. List the main ways the author defines the issue. What are the “problems” that the author will seek to remedy? Based on documentation and research, do these seem like feasible arguments?

2. Look at the author’s use of **counterargument and rebuttal.** If the text lacks counterarguments, flag (inside the text) where a counterargument might help to increase credibility and justify the author’s decision to label certain ideas as “problems.” Note if the author leaves a counterargument “hanging” and, thus, needs to provide a rebuttal.

3. Consider—regardless of your personal position—whether or not the author provides a clear and thorough explanation of the issue’s “problems.” Based on the content provided, do you find the argument feasible? Urgent? Controversial?

4. Discuss the author’s **use of research.** Does the author paraphrase and summarize sources in his/her own words? Smoothly incorporate direct quotations into the text? Rely on a variety of scholarly sources?

5. Review the author’s use of **subheadings.** Are there too many? Too few? Flag places where the introduction may need additional or less subheadings. Discuss the subheading’s formatting and the author’s employment of highlighting techniques throughout the analysis’ section.

Recommendation/Conclusion

1. List the main ways the author articulates her/his **solutions** to the issues. Compare this list to the list of issues (above). Are they parallel in focus? Provide suggestions. Be thorough—remember: readers come to formal reports in order to learn of potential ways to “solve” something!

2. Discuss the proposed solutions. Are they clear? Based on the author’s documented research, do the solutions seem feasible? Well grounded? Appropriate? Ethical?

3. Note whether or not the author uses enough research to “justify” her/his proposed solutions.

4. As the text concludes, does the author provide the following information:

A restatement of the text’s thesis (in a solution-based format)

A statement regarding the value of contemplating the issue/problem within the topic’s overall discussion

A statement regarding the value of discussing the topic, in general

A blatant statement that explains the social benefit of following the solutions documented in the author’s

report.

Remember: the author doesn’t need to provide four separate statements—s/he only needs to “hit” all of these details. Discuss the order of this concluding information and whether or not the author needs to provide any additional concluding material/ideas.

5. Compliment the author: note the “best” thing about her/his report, to date.