

reviewing drafts

quality of the argument

Before launching your critique, read the draft from start to finish in order to get a sense of the argument as a whole. Then, go back through the discourse, responding to these concerns:

claim

Double underline the portion of the discourse where the claim is set forth.

Is the claim clear? Are any of its key terms ambiguous or in need of definition?

Is the claim specific? Do its verbs stipulate a particular condition or clearly indicate how the parts of the claim are interrelated?

Is the claim neither obvious nor already known?

In what respects is the claim contestable? Might a reasonable person choose to disagree?

Is the claim appropriately qualified?

reasons

Underline each of the reasons for the claim, and number them 1, 2, 3, etc.

On what sort of appeal does each reason depend? Logical? Ethical? Experiential? Appeal to authority?

Do any fundamental values or beliefs (warrants) need clarification?

evidence

With a dotted line, underline each piece of evidence provided.

Does the writer explain the pertinence or relevance of the evidence to the argument at hand?

Is the evidence credible?

Is the evidence sufficient?

objections

Draw a box around the writer's acknowledgment or rebuttal of counterclaims.

How well are objections met?

Where does the writer need to acknowledge or respond to objections not yet dealt with?

other suggestions

What other suggestions for improving the argument can you offer?