

# Peer Review Feedback

Please follow **the Golden Rule of Reviewing**: review the paper as you would want your paper to be reviewed.

Use the following questions and the attached matrix to help you respond to your colleague's writing. Remember to offer specific, constructive suggestions for improvement. Consider ways to help her/him develop those ideas in writing or to better communicate those ideas to readers.

You can find other ideas about how to provide effective feedback at this site: <http://www.betterwritingfeedback.com/>

***Please mark up the paper as you review it (using Track Changes feature of Word when possible).*** We look for you to make your comments as an anonymous reviewer. *When you have finished reviewing the papers you were assigned, please return it by email to the instructor who sent you the paper.*

For your feedback, please begin with a brief narrative to summarize your feedback and respond to the following questions:

1. Is the topic addressed by this paper sufficiently important to interest a significant policy and practitioner audience?
2. Will this paper contribute to the development of Homeland Security as an academic field and domain?
3. How long do you think the paper would likely be read with interest after it is published?
4. What were the strongest and weakest claims?
5. What suggestions do you have for strengthening the organization, structure or argument for the paper?
6. Was your understanding or view of the topic altered in any way?

<b>Assessment Element</b>	<b>An Excellent Paper</b>	<b>A Good Paper</b>	<b>An Adequate Paper</b>	<b>An Inadequate Paper</b>
<b>Overall</b>	A superior effort, presenting a demanding argument with depth and clarity. It displays a firm, independent command of complex material. May exhibit a creative approach.	A very good paper must possess some elements of a truly excellent paper, even if it falls short in others. Most such papers tend to be strong on content, but somewhat weak in presentation.	Indicative of normal and acceptable graduate-level work, the difference between them being one of degree. Such a paper need not be especially striking or original, but it must still display workmanship, competence, and clarity. Its subject, although less complex or engaging than a very good paper, must be non-trivial, and it must be treated in a way that demonstrates an understanding of the basic facts.	An inadequate paper indicates that the work lacks, in some degree, the basic attributes of average work. The subjects or contents of such papers may simply be too general or inconsequential to meet the demands of the assignment. In addition, "C" papers display at least one, and "D" or "F" papers more than one serious defects (described below):
<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Was the paper well organized? Did it follow a logical flow?</li> <li>· Was the paper free of logical fallacies?</li> <li>· Did it demonstrate a grasp of the issues at stake?</li> </ul>	Scope and purpose of paper clearly described. Avoids flat, lifeless, or obvious statements, and presents the central idea or thesis in a way that engages the interest of the reader. Conclusion is revelatory or suggestive rather than simply repetitive. It goes beyond a summary of what has already been said to clarify or heighten its significance.	Scope and purpose of the paper is defined, although it may be too broad or too narrow for the length of the paper. Introduction does not quite focus the reader's attention. Conclusion may simply restate the introduction. Reader may be left with the impression that little has been learned in between Introduction and Conclusion.	Purpose and scope of the paper, the quality of the introduction and the conclusion do not quite satisfy the criteria of a "Good" paper, but do not fall consistently within the "Inadequate" criteria.	The topic of the paper is unclear, or missing a central or coherent argument. Introduction does not establish the main point of the paper. Or, if a central idea is presented at the start, the rest of the text wanders off from it in confusing and unpredictable ways. The conclusion does not tie the paper together; it may introduce irrelevant issues or confounding information; or it may bear only marginally on the main argument of the paper.

Assessment Element	An Excellent Paper	A Good Paper	An Adequate Paper	An Inadequate Paper
<p><b>Argument</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Has the author presented his or her argument clearly, concisely and persuasively?</li> <li>· Was specific and relevant evidence provided to support claims?</li> <li>· Were counter-arguments and alternative interpretations fully acknowledged and weighed fairly?</li> <li>· Were the judgments and conclusions clearly stated?</li> <li>· Did the author indicate the degree of tentativeness the judgments may involve?</li> </ul>	<p>The central idea or argument provides the main focus throughout. Paper is free of logical fallacies, and demonstrates a confident grasp of the issues raised. Assertions, judgments and conclusions are clearly stated, and include appropriate recognition of the degree of tentativeness they may involve. Counter-arguments and alternative interpretations are fully acknowledged and weighed fairly. Readers' questions and objections are anticipated and answered. Paper shows extensive knowledge of standard works and concepts related to the topic (while avoiding jargon). Argument is supported with evidence from scholarly and other authoritative sources. Author provides new information, clarity or a unique perspective to a scholarly discussion of the topic.</p>	<p>Paper may not demonstrate complete command of all the issues it raises, but it must be free of gross logical fallacies, and reasonably attentive to counter-arguments and alternative interpretations. In contrast to an excellent paper, however, the reader may still feel that important aspects of the subject have either not been explored or ignored by the author. Paper shows familiarity with knowledge of standard works and concepts related to the topic (while avoiding jargon). Argument supported with evidence from generally reliable, if not always authoritative sources. Author largely, but not exclusively, presents a review of what other people have written about the topic.</p>	<p>The argument is reasonably specific, appropriate to the scale of the paper, and clearly stated in the introduction. Supporting evidence may sometimes lack concreteness or relevance, but not to the point where the main argument is undermined. Paper shows less than thorough familiarity with knowledge of standard works and concepts related to the topic (while avoiding jargon). Supporting evidence is not always from authoritative or reliable sources, relying (for example) too much on "exemplifying" (i.e., finding a single source to support a primary claim) or other questionable sourcing practice. Author exclusively reviews what other people have written about the topic.</p>	<p>Arguments are unsupported. When evidence is offered, it is not sufficient to support the claims made or is based largely on unreliable or less than authoritative sources. The supporting evidence may include a large proportion of clichés, generalities, or irrelevancies. Unsubstantiated assertions and faulty reasoning may call the credibility of the whole paper into question. Treatment of the topic is superficial or contains numerous inaccuracies.</p>

<b>Assessment Element</b>	<b>An Excellent Paper</b>	<b>A Good Paper</b>	<b>An Adequate Paper</b>	<b>An Inadequate Paper</b>
<p><b><i>Application of Bloom's Taxonomy</i></b></p> <p>· Did the paper reach the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy?</p>	<p>The paper may demonstrate evaluation. It shows understanding of relative value of different sources and ideas (and shades of gray).</p> <p>The paper may demonstrate synthesis. Text may be organized by themes and ideas rather than by source. It may still have problems reconciling conflicting information.</p>	<p>The paper demonstrates analysis. It does not rely only on other authors' conclusions; themes and ideas of other writers are identified, but not linked across sources</p>	<p>The paper demonstrates some application. Ideas/evidence are clearly connected to the topic. The author relies on analysis of others; may use sources of varying degrees of credibility inappropriately.</p>	<p>The paper demonstrates some comprehension. Although some statements are in the author's own words, there is trouble understanding the relative importance of ideas and sources; interesting but not directly useful information is included</p>
<p><b><i>Style</i></b></p>	<p>Style is precise, idiomatic, and rhetorically effective, meaning that it is well suited to persuade or inform an intelligent reader. Ideas are arranged in a clear, logical order that is easy to follow. Paragraphs are tightly organized, and transitions between them guide the reader smoothly from one idea to the next.</p>	<p>Style may occasionally be flat or repetitive. Ideas are arranged logically. Transitions between paragraphs give the reader some help in following the argument. Although generally natural and logical, transitions may sometimes be awkward or misleading.</p>	<p>Paragraphs must be coherent, and transitions between them, while not invariably smooth, must not be disorienting. The language of a good-to-average paper must be free of slang and jargon, and generally idiomatic. Words must be used properly and consistently.</p>	<p>Paper appears to have been written hastily. Movement between ideas is abrupt, illogical or confusing. Paragraphs may lack internal unity, and transitions between them may be misleading or non-existent.</p>

<b>Assessment Element</b>	<b>An Excellent Paper</b>	<b>A Good Paper</b>	<b>An Adequate Paper</b>	<b>An Inadequate Paper</b>
<b><i>Mechanics</i></b>	Writing follows the grammatical and spelling conventions of standard English. Footnotes and bibliography are formatted consistently and used appropriately. Material from other authors is integrated smoothly into the paper. Quotations are limited to statements that are especially significant to the point being made.	Writing generally follows the grammatical and spelling conventions of standard English. The mechanics of a very good paper will have more errors than an excellent paper, or a faulty command of the details of paper preparation. The overall impression, however, must still be strictly professional. Material from other authors is credited and used creatively.	The mechanics of a good-to-average paper may be faulty in various ways, but they must not present a barrier to understanding, or call the credibility of the author into question. Errors of spelling, punctuation, and grammar, even if numerous, must be incidental. Material from other authors is credited, but the order of ideas presented in the paper is derived largely from those works.	Material is plagiarized. Even if cited, material from other authors appears to have been cut and pasted into text, with little interpretative context provided. Writing is difficult to follow because of numerous errors in grammar, spelling, or other significant deviations from standard English usage.