

Questions for Reviewing a Draft

After writing a paper, it may be helpful to have someone else read it or to stop working on it for a few days. In either case the following questions may assist you in reviewing the draft.

1. Assignment:

What is your overall impression of the draft?

Does the draft carry out the assignment?

What could be done to better fulfill the assignment?

2. Title and Introduction:

Does the title state what the draft is about?

Is it interesting?

How does it catch the reader's attention?

3. Supporting points:

List the main points made in the draft, in order of presentation. Then number them in order of interest to you, noting particularly parts that were not interesting or that seemed unnecessary.

Do any need to be explained more fully or less fully?

Should any be eliminated?

Are any confusing to you?

How well are the main points supported by evidence, examples, or details?

4. Paragraphs:

Which paragraphs are clearest and most interesting to read, and why?

Which ones are well developed?

Which paragraphs need further development?

What kinds of information seem to be missing?

5. Sentences:

Read the draft and choose three to five sentences you consider the most interesting or the best written because they are stylistically effective, entertaining, or memorable for some other reason.

Then choose the three to five sentences you see as weakest, whether confusing, awkward, or simply uninspired.

Are sentences varied in length, in structure, and in their openings?

6. Words:

Are verbs active and vivid?

Mark words that are particularly effective--those that draw vivid pictures or provoke strong responses.

Then mark words that are weak, vague, or unclear. Do any words need to be defined?

Are any words potentially offensive, to the intended audience or anyone else?

7. Conclusion:

Does the draft conclude in a memorable way, or does it seem to end abruptly or trail off into vagueness?

8. Final thoughts:

What are the main strengths and weaknesses in the draft?

What was the single most important thing said?