

# 8.b.

## Peer Evaluations

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Prepare an evaluation of the paper you have been assigned. In addition to this evaluation, you are free to make comments on the paper you receive in order to suggest alternate wordings or punctuation, to correct mis-spellings, or to make other comments you believe are relevant (you will return this edited paper to the author). Take these evaluations seriously. Too often, peer evaluators do not look hard enough for or think hard enough about problems in student papers. Developing meaningful critiques of colleagues' work is central to the scholarly process. These evaluations are an important part of your grade. You are not merely aiding your colleagues in writing clearly, you are demonstrating your own ability to read critically. Prepare two copies of your evaluation: one for the author of the paper you are evaluating, and one for me. Your peer evaluation should provide a detailed answer for each of these questions:

### **Thesis and structure:**

1. What is the paper about?
2. What is the thesis question it strives to answer?
3. What is the thesis?
4. What is the paper's "road map"? How is it structured to argue its thesis?
5. Where (in which paragraphs) does the argument stray?

### **The thesis itself:**

6. What unanswered questions does it raise?
7. What alternative explanations could be offered for the phenomenon described?
8. What criticisms does the author need to anticipate?
9. Given the thesis, what examples or scenarios could make it wrong?
10. How could the thesis be modified to overcome these shortcomings?

### **Topic sentences and paragraphs:**

11. Which topic sentences do not relate to the thesis?
12. Which topic sentences fail to tell readers where they are in the road map?
13. In which paragraphs is the "mini-thesis" unclear?
14. Which paragraphs fail to support the topic sentence?
15. Which paragraphs contain awkward or non-existent transitions to the next paragraph?

### **Use of evidence:**

16. In which paragraphs is there no primary source evidence to support the mini-thesis, or inappropriate evidence?
17. In which paragraphs does the author present primary source evidence, yet fail to explain why that evidence supports the mini-thesis?
18. Where has the author presented primary source evidence without adequately citing its source?
19. Where has the author presented primary source evidence without correctly incorporating it into the author's prose?