

PRINCIPLES FOR FEEDBACK ON TEXT IN GROUPS

Remember that

- you are working with unfinished texts/presentations – texts in progress
- the feedback in groups can help you get from unfinished text to finished text
- it is often easier to improve other people's texts than your own
- writing is rewriting
- feedback is *not* an assessment or a judgement, but the passing on of your experience as a reader

Rules of thumb for feedback

Be friendly. Feedback should primarily motivate the feedback receiver to continue their good work.

Be specific. Make sure the feedback is based in the text. Point out what you are commenting on and avoid too many disconnected, general comments.

Be constructive. Try to give *forward-looking* feedback, for example by suggesting what the writer *might* do to improve their text and promote the writing process.

Be critical. The feedback receivers want to hear honest opinions and do not want insincere praise. As long as you follow the first three rules of thumb, you can be critical.

As a feedback receiver, you should...

- start by briefly explaining what you particularly want to receive feedback on *See cover letter for feedback below
- keep your own text in front of you so that you can keep up with the feedback
- keep quiet while receiving feedback
- listen to what is being said and take notes
- only interrupt if you have short clarifying questions – *not* to explain and discuss
- wait to discuss the feedback until after the feedback meeting
- remember to say thank you for the feedback

As a feedback giver, you should...

- begin with the positive feedback
- give your feedback in order of priority (and keep the time)
- try to help the writer move on
- stand by your feedback (it is okay for feedback givers to disagree)
- not ask the writer any questions (but explain what is unclear to you)
- illustrate your feedback by pointing out passages in the text – also in case of positive comments
- repeat briefly if you agreed with comments given by previous feedback givers

All students should participate with a text.

All students feel under pressure in a writing process. When under pressure, it may be tempting to not send your text to the group and to just meet up and give feedback to others. This is *not* allowed. If you do not have a text in the pool, you cannot participate in the feedback meeting. Most students feel vulnerable about giving and receiving feedback, and everyone must be in it together. This will mean that all group members are equal.

If you are unable to produce the (quantity of) text agreed by the group, complete the following sentences and send these as a coherent initial text to your group, just the quantity and quality possible for you:

I am writing an assignment about...
I have decided to write about this because...
What I want to find out is...
This is important because...
I have got stuck because...
I still need to find out...
The most important point in my assignment is...
What I would like to expose in the assignment is...

Feedback givers must then give feedback as if the feedback receiver has just started their writing process, regardless of the actual quantity of text they have written so far. (See handout 3 about formulating feedback).

Cover letter for feedback

It may be useful to take the writer's own requests for feedback as your point of departure when giving feedback. Possibly some questions formulated specifically regarding the text and presented in a cover letter to the text that is submitted for feedback.

For instance "As a writer, I need feedback on..."

...Idea (is it clear what my idea is?)
...Content (do you understand what I'm writing?)
...Points (do they come out clear?)
...Purpose (what is it I'm trying to communicate without getting it out?)
...Documentation (is it clear how I arrive at my results?)
...Reasoning (does my text come across as convincing?)
...Coherence (does the order of my points make sense?)
...Etc.