

Contemporary American Fiction
Dr. Jacobson
Peer Review

Reader: _____

Writer: _____

These questions are designed to help you cover the material addressed in the assignment sheet and grading rubric. Consider the following as you conduct your peer reviews:

1. *As the reader and writer, don't be afraid to address issues/questions that are not included on the Peer Review Sheet. Don't assume just because it is NOT addressed on the sheet that it is not important. Reader's goal: Provide helpful feedback. Writer's Goal: Give your reader a sense of what you need and/or have concerns about.*
2. *As the writer, be open to constructive criticism. Then, make the changes you see fit. Be sure to keep all drafts and comments. Pass them in with your final paper. (Failure to do so will negatively impact your class participation evaluation.)*
3. *As the reader, give the writer "tough love." In other words, be kind, but honest. Give your peer the type of help you would like to see him/her give you. Make comments on the rough draft and this sheet. Providing substantive feedback will positively impact your class participation evaluation.*

Thesis/Argument

1. What is the writer's thesis? **Underline** the statement (usually 1-2 sentences) that expresses this main idea. Does the writer's claim change or become more specific by the end of the draft? Give the writer specific suggestions if the claim is not clear or seems to shift as you read the paper.

2. Does the thesis statement present a clear claim about at least one of the books we read in class? Is it clearly grounded in literary analysis (e.g. close reading of specific passages)? If not, help the writer revise his/her thesis and focus.

3. Does the paper clearly address some facet of postcolonial literature or history? Summarize in your own words how the paper's topic fits the course's theme.

4. Is the topic arguable? The statement, "The book shows how colonialism is exploitative or racism is harmful," is not the best example of an arguable thesis. Such claims are self-evident. A more critical approach, for example, might consider how the book engages in debates about colonialism, a specific colonial history, or ideas about race or gender relations. What critical insights are gained by reading this paper? Unique insight into the text and/or its context? Not everyone might see or agree how the book engages postcolonialism or the implications of the book's engagement. NOTE: The examples here are provided as samples. While all papers will engage some aspect of postcolonialism, all papers will not necessarily engage these topics (e.g. racism).

Argument Support & Organization

5. How are the author's claims supported? References to the text (quotation, paraphrase)? Secondary sources? Mark any claims that are not clearly supported. Mark and help your peer revise weak or unclear examples. In other words, help him/her to make the connection between the claim and the example/support clear and explicit.
6. Does the writer incorporate at least three peer-reviewed sources? Is each source clearly introduced and explained? Are any other sources incorporated? Are they quality sources or do they hurt the argument?
7. Is the author following MLA citation guidelines? Does the writer introduce paraphrased sources with clear in-text cues? Is there anything that is not cited, but perhaps should be? Is there a Works Cited?
8. Do the topic sentences and transitions follow a clear, logical structure? Provide at least one example of a successful or weak transition and explain why you think the transition was successful or weak.
9. Does the writer clearly arrange the analysis by topics or chronologically as the text unfolds? How is the arrangement revealed to the reader? Do the transitions and topic sentences clearly connect back to the writer's claim? Do any paragraphs seem out of order? Redundant? Disconnected from the paper's focus? Would you suggest re-arranging any individual paragraphs or paragraph blocs? Why? Why not?

Additional Comments

10. Name two things you liked about this essay.
11. Name two things you consider to be weaknesses of this essay.
12. How close is this writer to the final stages of revision? What stylistic elements would you suggest the writer focus on, based on this rough draft? (e.g. vary sentence structure; use of concrete, vivid language; sentence boundaries; sentence clarity; other grammar or mechanical elements)