FYW Peer Review Editing Process

Response-centered reviews.

You will be divided into groups of four. The goal here is to discover how readers react to your writing on their own terms (Pathos). It is likely that group members will have differing opinions about what they liked and disliked. It will be up to the writer to decide how to respond.

1. Read through these instructions to understand the process.

2. The first writer reads the draft aloud. It should be read straight through at a moderate pace -- slow enough so that the listeners can mark margins. While reading, the author must not stop to make corrections or comments.

3. As the writer reads, you as a listener will make plus/minus/query notes in the margin of your copy. You will not be sharing these written notes with anyone but will be discussing them orally.
   * Use the plus sign to note aspects about the draft that worked well for you as a reader; where it flowed; where the verbs were vigorous; where the logic sequenced well. Pay more attention to the "music," "flow," "energy," and sequencing than to technical details. You are looking at the force of the argument as a reader receives it, not being a grammar cop.
   * Use the negative sign note problem areas and any negative reactions, such as disagreement with ideas, where the rhythm was rough, or where ideas were not sequenced logically. Here, too, respond as a reader.
   * Use the question mark to note questions that occurred while listening, such as places that need clarification or further development.

4. Each group member, one at a time, in turn, then explains to the writer what he or she liked and did not like, what worked and what didn’t work, what was confusing, and so forth from the perspective of the reader’s experience. Your comments should focus on specific words, sentences, or paragraphs rather than on the paper as a whole. Your goal is exclusively to identify passages that caught your ear in one way or another. They simply describe their own personal reactions to the draft as written. It is helpful to start your comments with the words "As a reader I..." Group members must not give advice, correct grammar, or recommend changes. It will be the author’s responsibility (and theirs alone) to decide if or how to revise any of these sections.

5. The writer takes notes during each response but does not enter into a discussion. The writer listens, without trying to defend the piece or explain the intended meaning.

6. After each group member has responded to a writer’s essay, there should be a minute or so of quiet reflection time.

7. The next group member reads their essay. The cycle continues.

(Adapted from John C. Bean, Engaging Ideas (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001))