How to Write an Essay Critique
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An essay is an attempt to understand a topic more deeply and clearly. That is one of the reasons the essay as a basic form of writing is essential in many college courses. It is a tool for both discovering and communicating. All essays contain some basic components. A critique is a careful written examination of a subject that includes the writer's opinions. When writing a critique of essays determine if the essay covers the basic essay components and address each in your critique. A fair and thorough critique will help the writer produce the best product possible.

Step 1
Begin your critique by stating whether the essay provides stimulating ideas. Determine if it focuses on a specific, narrowly defined topic. Establish if the essay contains a clear, insightful thesis statement about the topic. Ask yourself if the essay supports the thesis with facts, examples, quotations and other evidence.

Step 2
Examine the essay for logical organization. Ascertain if the essay includes an interesting opening paragraph that pulls the reader into the topic, narrows the focus and states the thesis. Determine if the organizational pattern used is appropriate for the type of essay. For example, if it is a cause/effect essay, determine if causes are identified and effects explored. Establish if the essay uses transitions to link ideas in sentences and paragraphs and includes an effective closing paragraph.

Step 3
The next area to address in your critique is the voice of the essay. Decide if the essay speaks clearly and knowledgeably. Consider if the essay uses jargon and clichés. Determine if the essay shows that the writer is truly interested in the subject and the subject is tailored for the indented audience.

Step 4
In this step of your critique determine if the essay uses appropriate word choice. Judge if the essay defines and explains unfamiliar terms. Include in your critique whether the essay contains specific nouns and strong action verbs. Mention if the essay maintains the appropriate level of formality. Finally, consider for you critique the overall fluency and correct and accurate copy. Decide if it flows smoothly from one idea to another and displays varied sentence length and structure. Consider if the essay follows the standard rules for writing, from grammar to usage.

References
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The College Writer: A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching; Randall VanderMey, Verne Meyer, John Van Rys, Dave Kemper, Pat Sebranek; 2004

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