Peer-Response Guidelines

In your peer-response paper, write one and a half to two pages in which you answer some (but by no means all) of these questions as a reader. Compliment the writer on things he or she does well, but also constructively point out any areas about which you feel unsure. Make your constructive criticism (as well as your compliments) specific, and offer alternatives or suggestions when you can. You should feel free to mark on the paper itself, not only to point out such things as punctuation or spelling problems, but also to make suggestions or mark passages you refer to in your response. You should write the response in the form of a letter addressed to the writer and signed by you. **Please bring TWO printed copies of the response paper to class on Friday.** One will be for your peer, and the other you will turn in for a grade. I will hand it back to you later so you can include it in your portfolio.

INTRODUCTION

* How does the introduction grab your attention (or fail to)?
* Does the introduction intrigue without divulging everything?

THESIS

* What is the message/theme/central image of the paper?
* Is this message/theme/image implicit or explicit?
* Does the message/them/image play out well throughout the paper?

VOICE/TONE

* Is the essay in the first person? The third person? Does it shift between points of view? If so, is this effective or distracting?
* Is the essay told in present or past tense? If past tense, is all action and commentary in the past, or is the “present” voice making comments about past events? Is the choice of tense effective?
* What is the tone of the essay—humorous, nostalgic, distanced, serious, a combination?
* Are the voice, tense, and tone a good fit with the subject matter?

DETAILS/DEVELOPMENT

* What kinds of details (specific incidents, sensory descriptions, etc.) does the essay include?
* How effective are these details in developing a theme or idea throughout the essay?
* Are there strong transitions/connections between the parts of the essay?
* Are the incidents and details focused and specific enough for the length and purpose of the assignment?

STYLE

* Does the writer make clear and effective word choices? Does the writer avoid clichés and repetitiveness?
* How are the sentences structured? Is there a variety of sentence lengths and rhythms?
* What is the diction of the essay—that is, is the language formal (and if so, is it *too* formal or stiff)? Is it informal (and if so, is it *too* informal or slangy)? Does it include certain specialized terms, and, if so, are they explained by the context in which they appear?

CONCLUSION

* Does the essay end abruptly or does it come full circle?
* Are all points brought up in the essay and resolved in some way?