Writing a Critique

**Definition:** A critique is a systematic analysis of an idea or piece of literature that discusses its validity and evaluates its worth.

**Qualities of a good critique:** A good critique answers these questions:

1.       Who is the author and what are his/her qualifications?   
2.       What is the nature of the work (type & intended audience)   
3.       What is its significance—how does it rate against other material on the same subject?   
 By the same author?   
4.       How well does the author meet his/her objectives?   
5.       What is the plan, method? Is it well conceived? Does it help achieve the author's objectives? 6.       What are the underlying assumptions? Are they stated or do they lurk behind a stance of   
 neutrality and objectivity?   
7.       How do assumptions and biases affect the validity of the piece?   
8.       Are the assumptions/statements supported by evidence?   
9.       What evidence and ideas has the author failed to consider?   
10.   Are the author's judgments and conclusions valid?

**Pre-Writing Process:**

1.       Read the piece to be critiqued very carefully.

2.       Reread the material.

a.       Divide it into paragraphs and sections

b.       Label each

c.        Underline key ideas and terms

3.       Review background facts about the author and the issue or issues.

4.       Choose your position.

.        List your major reasons for selecting this position.

a.       List facts, examples, and authorities that support each reason.

b.       List facts, examples, and authorities which opponents could use as arguments against your position.

c.        List counterarguments for "c."

d.       List the possible implications or outcomes of adopting, enacting, or putting your position into effect.

**Writing Process:**

1.       Write First Draft

a.       **Introduction**

1.       Identify your topic.   
2.       Use something (e.g., quote, story) to capture reader's interest.   
3.       Place your topic in a context that justifies the reader's attention.   
4.       State your thesis clearly.

b.       **Body**

1.       Write an objective summary of the work.   
2.       Discuss all information (e.g., author's key assumptions) needed to make   
 your points.   
3.       Discuss author's work in light of your thesis.  
  
(**All** points should **relate directly** to your **thesis** statement).

c.        **Conclusion**

1.       Restate your thesis.   
2.       Summarize your major points and state their significance. 3.       State/discuss the implications of your thesis.

2.       Check your paper for:

* factual accuracy
* repetition
* word choice
* style
* critique criteria

3.       **READ** your critique **ALOUD** and **REVISE**.

4.       **Edit/proofread** (Check grammar, punctuation, and spelling).

5.       Write Draft 2.

6.       Have a **knowledgeable person read** your paper.

7.       **Rewrite, edit and proofread** as necessary.

8.       Submit for grading.