



Asking Questions to Revise Writing

Your job as a revising partner is a very important one. You can help the writer by:

- giving the writer a sense of how completely the task has been accomplished
- praising parts of the piece that are well expressed or well explained
- identifying areas of confusion
- targeting statements or arguments that may not be well supported with details
- suggesting new avenues of approach.

However, the writer owns the writing, and should not feel that your suggestions or ideas are being imposed as the solution. The best way to help your writing partner is to phrase your comments as open-ended prompts, as questions, or as a combination of an observation and a question. Some suggestions are below.

- Begin by using any “praise” statements that you can.
- If you can’t use the “praise” suggestion, you should use the “questions.”

Praise	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work seems very complete. • I really like the way you wrote.... [Be specific!] • Your point of view is very clear. • Your supporting details are very strong in this paragraph. • Your introduction (or conclusion) is very strong. • Your introduction really gives me a clear picture of where this piece of writing is going. • You’ve organized your arguments in a very convincing way. • Your topic sentences state the main idea of each paragraph very clearly. • Your word choices are very suitable for this assignment and topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your writing doesn’t seem to be finished. What are your plans for finishing it? • This part confuses me. What could you do to make it more clear? • What is your point of view here? • How can you support this argument with more strength? What is your evidence in this paragraph? • How could you make your introduction (or conclusion) stronger? • What could you add to your introduction to give me a “road map” of the direction of this piece of writing? • How could you organize this piece to really persuade your reader to agree with your point of view? • How could you rearrange the ideas in this paragraph to have a clear topic sentence? • Your language may be too casual for this type of assignment. How might you change some of the words to be a bit more formal?