



Universal Responding Questions

Point/Message

- Summarize the message or point (the thesis of the paper), as completely as you can.
- Note if there seems to be more than one point or if you have trouble figuring out the point?
- SO WHAT? Why would someone want to read this paper? Is the writer catching your interest or just filling pages?

Focus & Development

- Has the writer focused the paper so that it can be adequately developed? Is the writer so focused that she seems stretching to fill space or so unfocused that she can't develop it all?
- If the focus is too broad or too narrow, how might the writer change the focus?
- After reading the paper, do you have the sense that you thoroughly understand the point(s) the author is making? Is there any idea that could use more (or less) explanation?

Audience

- To whom is the author writing this paper? A particular person? The world? Someone who's interested in the subject? Someone who agrees with the writer? Someone who disagrees with the writer?
- Is this the best possible audience for this paper? If not, do you have any suggestions for a better audience? OR, how might the paper be changed to better meet the needs of the intended audience?
- As a reader (and member of the audience of the paper), how were you affected by the writing? Interested? Bored? Angered? Calmed? Puzzled? Do you think your response was the one the writer intended?

Voice

- Describe the voice or tone of the writing. Use a metaphor or compare the voice to that of another person or type of writing ("It sounds like Homer Simpson yelling at Bart" or "It sounds like a textbook").
- Is the voice consistent? Is the same author speaking throughout the paper?
- Has the author chosen an appropriate voice for her paper?

Evidence

- What kind of evidence does the author provide to support her message?
- How specific is the evidence the author cites? Which evidence do you think is effective? Where does this author need more evidence?

Organization

- Write a brief outline on the back of the last page of the draft or in the margins, listing the point of each paragraph.
- Does this organization make sense? Are there any places where you get lost while reading? How could the author improve the organization?

Paragraphs

- Too long? Long paragraphs, full of short, unrelated sentences, may mean the authors need to find more support for their claims. Some of those individual sentences may need to be expanded into full paragraphs.
- Too short? Short paragraphs may mean the author needs more evidence to support some claims.

Introduction and Conclusion

- Does the author take too long to get to the main idea of the paper? Does the introduction catch your attention? How could the author change the introduction to draw the reader in?
- Does the paper begin or end too abruptly? Is the conclusion powerful, or does the author just end the paper or deliver a boring summary of the main points?

Sentences

Word Choice

Grammar & Punctuation

Spelling & Format