

Critical Review Workshop
Guidelines for comments and workshop discussions:

Begin by reading your partners' critical reviews for pleasure. Then, take a look at the list of questions provided on the next page and reread the reviews with these questions in mind. Write out your comments on your partners' critical reviews (see list below). Use each question as the point of departure for a thoughtful response ("yes" and "no" answers are of little value to your partners). Your finished comments on each critical review should be at least 400 words long (double-spaced, not counting the questions themselves). When you are satisfied with what you have written, go back to the class webpage for the critical review (Session 11) and post your comments in the appropriate location for each of your partners. Be sure to include your name and the name of the essay's author with your comments.

Remember that your comments are intended to help the writer create a more compelling version of his or her critical review. Be tactful and complete. I have not asked you to comment on the writer's grammatical or mechanical errors. I will take care of those problems myself. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful comments.

Questions for the Critical Review

SPECIFICS:

1. How effective is the current introduction? Does it engage your interest? Does it establish a clear direction for the ensuing discussion? Any suggestions for the author?
2. Does the writer make clear why his or her subject matters?
3. What is the main idea (central insight) of the critical review? Where do you see that idea stated most clearly?
4. Does the writer provide sufficient background information about the subject of the documentaries? Does that information appear in the most useful location within the critical review?
5. Did you learn enough about the documentaries to enable you to follow the writer's analysis?
6. Does the writer make effective use of one or more of the scholarly articles on science documentaries? If not, can you suggest a possible role for one of the articles?
7. How well does the writer handle evidence from the video and the journal articles? Is there enough supporting evidence within each paragraph? If not, point out weak spots.
8. Can you follow the logic that leads from one paragraph to the next? Identify any gaps—places where you have difficulty following the logic.
9. How effective is the writer's conclusion? What changes or additions might you suggest?
10. Reconsider the introduction in the light of the conclusion. Does the introduction point the reader in the right direction? Would you suggest any additions to the introduction?

OVERVIEW:

11. What is the most intriguing point presented in this review?
12. What would you say are the review's major strengths and why?

13. Should the writer consider reorganizing the critical review? Does the sequence of points within the review lead us step by step toward the central insight?
14. What do you think the writer needs to focus on when he or she begins revising this critical review? (You may omit this question if you feel you have answered it in your earlier comments.)
15. Does the writer's prose serve him or her well? Do you have any general suggestions for next version?
16. Review author's letter to workshop partners. If the writer asked for your input on a particular question, please answer that question here.

Reminders for next version:

1. Identify your writers and directors (or producers) in the body of your critical review and include any relevant background information.
2. Use the MLA in-text citation system. You can find information on this citation system on the web (check out the Purdue writing site).
- 3. Remember to include a list of "Works Cited" at the end of your essay. Without such a list, your readers have no way of locating the sources that you mention in your essay. **The absence of a Works Cited list will result in an automatic grade penalty.****
 - Documentaries, articles, and websites should all appear in your list of works cited.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu>

21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Fall 2016

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.