

Peer Editing Worksheet
for Undergraduate Comparative Research Essays in Film and Literature
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1. Does the paper have a creative or explanatory title that summarizes the argument in a few words?
2. Does the introductory paragraph clearly identify the differing historical contexts and/or stylistic aspects of the primary texts (films or fiction) the writer is discussing? Does the writer note these differences between the texts while explaining why they deserve to be compared?
3. Does the introductory paragraph refer to one or more existing arguments, derived from academic secondary sources, about the texts the writer is discussing? Does the writer then clearly identify — mentioning specific scenes, character development, narrative, stylistic or other elements of the texts — how he or she will respond to this existing debate?
4. Does the writer conclude the introductory paragraph with a relevant thesis statement that explains *how* his or her view builds upon, or differs from, existing scholarship and *why* the writer's original yet synthetic response to the texts is important?
5. Is the thesis clear? Why or why not? Is the thesis clearly an argument (i.e., this is *why* x is so...) and *not* just an observation?
6. Is the academic scholarship cited in the essay relevant – and recent? (In film and literary scholarship, pre-1980 work is considered old; pre-1960 is practically ancient. This *doesn't mean* that such older work is irrelevant; it needs to be assessed by the writer, however, with a careful eye to its present relevance.) Is the scholarship thoughtfully and effectively incorporated into the essay's body paragraphs to support, or otherwise set up, the essay writer's argument?
7. Does the essay have a clear and explicit structure in which each paragraph begins with a helpful transition sentence or phrase that summarizes and carries forward the advancing argument from the previous paragraph?
8. Is there evidence of close reading and effective analysis (specific plot points, stylistic elements, shots, passages or scenes are presented and analyzed in the essay as key evidence for the writer's claims)?
9. Does the writer discuss, with some specificity in the essay's body, the historical, cultural, social, aesthetic, and/or other specific features of the texts to contextualize any claims about them? If the writer is drawing from two or more primary texts, is each contextualized and/or historicized?
10. Is the writing sufficiently objective, evaluative and analytical while demonstrating engagement with, and enthusiasm for, the topic? Does the writer pay close attention to spelling, grammar, academic diction and complete sentence structure (avoiding comma splices, run-on sentences or sentence fragments; properly using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs such as however, although, therefore, etc.)?
11. Does the writer reach a satisfying conclusion that ties together the essay's claims, scholarship and textual/filmic evidence, restating the main argument in other terms and, ideally, leaving the reader thinking?