

Here are some suggestions for using the feedback from your review. In my experience, reviewers often make wonderful and apt critiques of materials they are given. Unfortunately, my experience is also that authors just as often fail to take these reviews into accounts when [not] making revisions .

Thesis and Topic Sentences

- How is your thesis? Use Professor Simpson's "Five Ways of a Thesis" to evaluate and improve yours: <http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~simpsonsone/Connections/Writing/Thesis>
- *What* are your topic sentences? If the topic sentences identified by your reviewer are not those you intended, consider possible sources of confusion. Is there unity in the paragraph, or does it wander with multiple ideas?
- *Where* are your topic sentences? If they are at the end of the paragraph, restructure so they are closer to the beginning (first or second sentence) as an aid to the reader.

General Writing

- Writers often repeat patterns. Look for other instances of the problem identified in "General Writing" #2 and fix them accordingly.
- Whether or not your reviewer pointed them out, you should scour your paper for "to be" verbs (is, are, being, were, etc.) These often take the place of stronger verbs and are a set-up for using the passive voice. Eliminate them wherever possible and replace with stronger forms.
- Whether or not your reviewer pointed it out, you should scour your paper for the word "this." If it is not followed immediately by a clarifying noun, e.g. "This argument does not hold water.", it is a likely candidate for what is called "broad reference." Make sure every "this" is followed by something concrete to reduce ambiguity and promote clarity.
- Remember paragraphs are a device to help your reader understand your argument. Use them freely, and add transitions (i.e., meta-argument language) to guide your reader through your thoughts. Pay attention to the comments of your reviewer.
- For very good results, use Professor Simpson's "30-point inspection" on your paper: <http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~simpsonsone/Connections/Writing/Polish> The careful reader will note I have just violated one of these points.
- For the best possible results, read your paper aloud. You may be surprised how easily this will allow you to spot awkward phrases and sentences in need of revision.