

Title: Giving Feedback

Giving feedback that is useful and well-received is not always intuitive. Following some guidelines can increase the likelihood that your feedback is acted on.

What constitutes good feedback? Good feedback focuses on the content, not the content creator. Good feedback includes suggestions, not just criticisms. Good feedback emphasizes what is working, not only what isn't working.

Feedback checklist:

- Read the whole draft.
- Summarize the point of the draft or of each section of the draft.
- Pick the top 3 things you like about their draft.
 - Tell them those 3 things!
 - bad: "I like this paragraph."
 - good: "I like that this paragraph has a clear topic sentence."
- Focus on 3 things that you think will most improve the draft.
- If you want to make suggestions, make sure they are concrete and actionable.
 - bad: reorganize your draft.
 - good: consider shifting paragraph 4 earlier, before paragraph 2.
- If you want to prompt reflection, you might ask guiding questions.
 - "Does the claim in paragraph 2 contradict the point in paragraph 5?"
 - "Does a reader need you to explain this concept?"
- Consider your word choice so your recipient hears opportunities, not failures.
 - Is your point a suggestion? a demand? a conversation starter? an observation?
 - I like to use: "you might..." "consider.." "what about..." "could you..."
- Remind the recipient about their hard work and potential.

Verbal feedback:

- Use a positive, upbeat tone:
 - your recipient can and will pick up on your laughter or your frustration.
 - some people think that sharing a lot of attitude makes feedback more human, but it doesn't make it more humane.
 - example: "Ugh, I mean, I guess this is a fine way to say it if you want to sound boring."
 - instead, try: "Having you considered adding an example to liven this up?"

Written feedback: Consider the number of comments you provide on a draft - less is more!