

GUIDED CRITIQUE

First, read the essay empty-handed!
Consider your initial impression and the aspects that stand out.

Select a colored pencil. UNDERLINE the personal statement.

Using the same color, **SHADE** the most arresting piece(s) of evidence that support(s) the personal statement.

Use a large STAR in the margin to identify the hook. Write a note to the author to explain how/why it grabs you or how it could be more effective.

Find the BEST example of “**show; don’t tell**” and CIRCLE it.

Using a new color, UNDERLINE the first three words of each sentence. Check for variety. Make suggestions for improving variety of sentence beginnings.

Using a highlighter, **HIGHLIGHT** every other sentence in this paragraph. Count the number of words in each sentence. Place this number above the period at the end of each sentence.

Place [BRACKETS] around two sentences that can be combined in order to improve variety of sentence length.

Place a /SLASH/ in any sentence that can be broken apart in order to improve variety of sentence length.

Choose a new color. Circle the 3-5 strongest words/phrases in the essay.

Choose a new color. Look for ZAP words. These are words that undermine originality, flair, and voice from your writing. They can be words for which readers have no clear understanding of the true meaning—they cannot picture it. For example, the words, “good,” “bad,” “fun,” and “really” are all ZAP words.

Imagine that the author of this essay will spend three more sessions working to produce the final draft. Identify THREE tasks that will lead to an improved essay. Use a post-it note to identify these three tasks and the approximate amount of time the author should devote to each task. Sign your note and sign off on the essay.

