

## Writing and the Environment

### Guidelines for comments and workshop discussions:

I have made one significant change in this assignment. Since the class can be divided into two small workshop groups and you have a week before the workshop, I would like you to write out your comments on both of your partners' essays.

Begin by reading your partners' essays for pleasure. Then, take a look at the list of questions provided here and reread the essays with these questions in mind. Finally, focus on one essay at a time, and write out your comments. Use each question as the point of departure for a thoughtful response ("yes" and "no" answers are of little value to your partners). The finished comments on each essay should be at least one and half pages long (double-spaced). When you are satisfied with what you have written, print out four copies (one for me and one for each member of your workshop group).

Remember that your comments are intended to help the writer create a more compelling version of his or her essay. 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 writing thoughtful comments on your partner's essay.

Essay #1  
Questions to Consider

1. Do the first few paragraphs establish a direction and focus for the essay? If not, can you suggest minor revisions or additions that might clarify the author's primary focus?
2. How would you characterize the main idea or focal point of this essay?
3. Does the author supply an adequate context for the narrative? Do we know enough to appreciate the narrative? Suggestions for additions or changes?
4. Does the author provide sufficient detail? Can you envision the setting and the actions?
5. Are there any significant gaps in the narrative? Do you want more information or description? Does any of the material within the narrative seem extraneous?
6. Does the essay come to a natural end? Can you see the connection between the conclusion and the introduction? Suggestions?
7. Does the author achieve a natural balance between narration and reflection? Do the reflections contained in the essay fit naturally with the narrative?
8. What do you see as the major strengths of this essay?
9. What aspects of the essay should be reconsidered or revised? Where does it need attention? (If you have already covered #9 in your response to earlier questions, you may skip it.)