**Commenting Prompt for a Thesis-Driven Essay**

1. **Thesis:** Read the essay up until you identify the writer's thesis statement. Underline it. Stop reading at this point and write answers to the following questions:

a) What is the thesis’ position?

b) How does the audience know that the thesis is *arguable*?

c) How could the thesis be revised to clarify its position or take a position (if one hasn't been claimed)?

2. **Point predict:** Now read through the paper, using the “point-predict method.” Pause every 1-2 sentences or so and summarize the writer's main argument to the side of the paragraph and predict what will come next. Write your responses in the margins. Clearly identify any places on the paper where your expectations as a reader were not met or where you were unclear on the writer's point. If possible, indicate what you were expecting.

3. **Organization:** Does each paragraph adhere to a single main idea? Write the main idea to the side of the paragraph. If there are several, list them.

a) Where does your perception of the main idea match the topic sentence?

b) Which topic sentences need to be revised to reflect the paragraph's main idea?

c) Where does the essay do a good job of transitioning between paragraphs?

d) Identify two places where transitions between paragraphs can be improved.

4. **Reasons and evidence:** Does the essay provide enough explanation for its reasons for its thesis?

a) Where does the writer successfully introduce a quote?

b) Where does the writer need to add an introduction to a quotation?

c) Where does the essay need to follow-up quotes with more and better explanations?

d) Are there places where secondary sources seem to take the writer off-track (do the quotes relate to the main thesis and the main idea of the paragraph)?

e) Where does the essay focus more on other people's arguments than on stating its position in relation to other positions?

5. **Opposing viewpoints:** Where does the writer address opposing viewpoints?

a) Does the writer fairly represent those logical opposing viewpoints or does he/she use dismissive language (“That’s absurd.” “That makes no sense,” “That’s not how I saw it at all”)?

b) What additional counter-arguments could the writer might to rebut (or counter) these objections?

6. **Concluding:** Underline where the conclusion summarizes the essay’s thesis and main points.
a) What else does the conclusion do (in other words, what else is written?)?

b) What unanswered questions do you have as the audience of this paper?

7. **Strengths:** What is the biggest strength of this draft?

8. **Summary:** What are the two most significant changes\* the writer could make to improve this paper? (You may choose two of the suggestions you've made already or bring up something new)

\*Don’t make comments about grammar or mechanics. Save those for the final draft!