AFOSP Strategies for Peer-Editing a Paper

Assignment:
1. What are the most important criteria in fulfilling this assignment—what is the paper supposed to address? Has the paper fully addressed these criteria?
2. Are there other relevant suggestions or things to consider in the assignment that are not addressed in the paper?
3. Does the paper fit the genre? In other words, does it follow the format for a research paper, persuasive essay, personal narrative, cover letter, letter to the editor, etc.?
4. Is the language in the paper appropriate to the genre? (i.e., most academic essays avoid profanity, vernacular, clichés, and conversational English; some genres require active voice, some require passive voice, etc.)

Focus:
1. Does the paper remain focused on the topic and the assignment?
2. If needed, is there a title that clearly describes the paper?
3. Does the paper have a thesis—or does it even need one (consider which genres do not use theses)? Is the thesis clearly stated, original, and specific? In other words, does it go beyond an obvious statement of fact?
4. Does the paper have a purpose?
5. Does the paper demonstrate rhetorical awareness of the audience, and use language appropriate to that audience?

Organization:
1. Does the paper have an easily recognizable introduction, body, and conclusion?
2. Does the introduction clearly and quickly explain the purpose of the paper and cover all the main points?
3. Is the conclusion a reflection of the introduction, and does it summarize or wrap up the thesis and evidence?
4. Do the paragraphs transition logically from one to the next? In other words, does the paper “flow” well?
5. Does the paper contain repetition of either ideas or specific words? If ideas are repeated, does the repetition serve a clear rhetorical purpose?
6. Are the paragraphs focused on one idea, point, example, statement, quote, etc.? (Remember, it’s best to avoid the page-long paragraph that discusses two or more things)
7. Do the paragraphs contain a noticeable imbalance of simple and complex sentences (i.e., too many long or short sentences in a row)?

Support:
1. What kinds of support are used in the paper? (Logical appeals, emotional appeals, appeals to an authority, slogans/clichés, personal experiences, hypotheticals, statistics/facts/figures/graphs, etc.)
2. How effective is the support in reinforcing the paper’s claims and thesis?
3. Are sources cited properly (using the appropriate citation style)?
4. Do quotes and paraphrases clearly introduce, expand on, summarize, or provide an example of an idea? (or does the author “quote-and-run”?)
5. Are sources relevant to the passage, or would they be more relevant elsewhere in the paper?
6. Could the paper be strengthened by addressing a naysayer? If so, does the paper address one without “cherry-picking” arguments?

Proofreading:
1. Is the paper free of grammatical and spelling errors?
2. Are there any sentences that seem unclear or awkward?
3. Do sentences transition well from one to the next?
4. Do subjects and verbs agree? Are pronouns clear and free of sexist language (i.e., universal ‘he’ or ‘she’)?
5. Are there any punctuation errors (i.e., comma splices or incorrect usage of semicolons or colons, citations following punctuation, etc.)?