

How To Write a Review

This document will cover the basics of gathering observations and forming them into a review of another judge.

Making Observations

During and even before an event, if possible, begin to make observations about how the review subject has been performing. If you are the Head Judge of the event, you may even begin this process while reviewing event applications, as there may be some relevant observations there. An important point to remember while observing is that even small observations, when combined with other points, can become meaningful and actionable feedback. Some examples of observations you may make are as follows:

- Jessica had an excellent application, highlighting meaningful event experience she had coming in to this, while also clearly describing what she brought to the event, as well as what areas she hoped to gain experience in.
- James showed up to the venue on time and in a clean uniform.
- When taking a simple GRV judge call, Jaiden spent a little long explaining the rules to the players, when they likely only wanted the outcome. Don't forget that you can always follow up with those players between rounds if you think they need more clarification.
- When you gave your opening announcements, you really projected your judge voice well, and I was able to clearly hear all announcements while on the other end of the room waiting to collect lists.

Take Notes

While taking these observations, you will greatly help yourself by making note of them somewhere, usually in a small notebook. Keeping this information neatly organized and collected will make writing the review later on much easier on yourself. While you prepare your notebook for gathering the notes, make sure to include the review subject's full name, DCI# (which you can obtain from the Score Keeper if needed), and relevant details of the event itself (store name, date, etc.).

At the end of the event (or before/during, depending on your goals) inform your review subject that you have taken some observations (or intend to so during the event if you are informing them earlier than at the end of the event) and intend to write a review for them. Try to avoid submitting a review of someone who has no idea one is coming, though you can certainly make observations without the subject knowing you intend to write a review (just let them know sometime before the review is uploaded). It is also often good practice to allow the review subject a chance to read the review before you submit, in case they wish to further discuss or clarify any of your points.

Writing the Review

A good way to begin writing the review is to not worry about the fine details of getting it to the correct place just yet. Simply open your favorite word-processing program and start getting some thoughts collected on a page. A great way to begin is to take your notes from the event and rewrite them here, while explaining a bit of each observation more fully. For instance, your event notes may say "pushed chairs a lot," while when transferring from notebook to document I may write "I noticed

Jasmine very obviously and proactively pushing in chairs during the event. While this may seem like a minor thing, keeping the event space clean and tidy can mean a lot to players and TO's (and judges trying to get to those calls in the aisles!). Being so obvious about pushing those chairs in also sets a great example for other judges on staff to be aware of these steps we can take to keep a venue neat and tidy."

When giving criticism or making note of an area that may need improvement, make every attempt to indicate actions that can be taken to help the review subject make that improvement. For example, if I have the following note "needs review on HCE," I may write in the review itself something like "I noticed during a few calls and our subsequent discussions that Hidden Card Error was causing you some difficulties. If you can, try to review the IPG and annotated IPG on this infraction, as it has some nuance and takes a bit to fully grasp and apply. JudgeCast (www.judgecast.com/archives/929) has a few different episodes covering this topic, as does Toby Elliott's blog (<https://blogs.magicjudges.org/telliott/>). Take some time and check out those resources (or even let me know if you'd like to discuss more in the future)." Make an effort to ensure your feedback is actionable and not simply observational. It will generally be more helpful to your review subject to have a step to begin taking, rather than simply a "this needs improvement" style comment in a review.

Your review can have as many or as few sections as you wish, though a good general starting point is to use "Strengths," "Areas for Improvement," and "Comments" as your first three sections (these are the default sections when creating a review). These sections can be fine-tuned or adjusted in any way you see fit, but try to avoid creating so many sections that the review doesn't read well all together.

Uploading the Review

Once you have written your review, it is time upload that review to Judge Apps (<https://apps.magicjudges.org>) to ensure the review subject receives it, and it is logged with other reviews correctly. The steps to do this are as follows:

- Navigate on your browser to Judge Apps (<https://apps.magicjudges.org>)
- Log in
- On the left-hand menu (or drop down if on mobile) select the "Reviews" link
- Select "Write a Review" from the drop-down menu
- Fill in the requested information about the recipient and the event (all neatly captured in your notes from the event itself)
- Copy/Paste the review you wrote earlier into the relevant sections
- Click the "Save Draft" button at the bottom of the page
- Reread and proofread your review at this point
- If you are satisfied with what you have written, submit the review