Here are some extracts from a History of Art assignment along with comments made by the tutor.

You will notice that all three comments are referring to the need to make a critical point or a critical argument, but that some of the comments are commenting on where this has been done well and where it could be improved.

a) In Extract A the tutor identifies where there is a good critical point.

b) In Extract B the tutor explains that simply making comparisons with no purpose is not sufficient and lacks a critical argument.

c) In Extract C the tutor once again shows that the writer has shown a critical argument but that they would have liked to see more of this in the assignment and not just at the end.

It is therefore very important and useful when you get your feedback to look at all comments together. If an area for improvement has been identified, you might find strong examples in other parts of the essay where you have done this well. This might help you in thinking about how to solve the issue. Concentrating on the positive and the negative together can be very useful. Read the below comments and think about how Extract B could be improved. Essentially, the writer observes a good contrast but they need to think about why that contrast matters.

Extract C the writer tells us why the differences between writers matters and why their approach might be problematic or strong. We can also see from the feedback in Extract C that this is something we should be considering throughout our writing, not just in the conclusion. This approach was needed earlier in the essay when Extract B was written as well as earlier and later.

Assignment Title: In her essay 'Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity', Griselda Pollock pioneered an investigation into the relationship between gender and space. Discuss the extent to which art historians writing after her have extended or departed from her work in this area. Answer with reference to the work of Pollock and at least one art historian concerned with the subject of gender and space.

Extract A:

Pollock seems to be chasing a need for gender equality but in so doing confirms established gender differences, whereas Matthews questions gender classifications as we have been conditioned to understand them, which seems to have more relevance to the modern world in which gender differences are breaking down and new classifications of sexuality emerge.

Comment [WU1]: good – Here we see you moving from simply making observations towards putting forth a critical point based on those observations ☺
Extract B
Matthews seeks to break down gender differences in art where Pollock naively accepts them but seeks to break them down in art history.

Extract C
In conclusion, from an art historical perspective Pollock’s analysis is multi-layered and further reaching as it questions the whole practice of art history and challenges our values, but in cultural studies terms Nicoletta and Matthews go further into the complexities of sexual and gender identities and are more current, despite writing only a few years after Pollock. In light of the modern world and how we understand it, Pollock, writing twenty years ago, is guilty of the social simplicity she criticises Clark for and neglects recent acceptance of multiple sexualities and multiple genders, which may even be present in one individual.