

Critique Guidelines

Please wait your turn and keep your remarks brief

The NUMBER ONE rule of critiquing is to remember that the writer is a person, with feelings. Put yourself in his/her place as you give your critique—how would you feel if you were hearing this comment? Remember that some writers are just fledglings. Will your comments make them want to quit writing altogether? That's not what the Writers League is all about.

LISTEN carefully and make notes while the manuscript is being read. Afterwards, give written suggestions to the author.

MAKING COMMENTS:

1. Start with what you LIKE— a memory it evokes, a picture you get, a feeling identifying with the character, a word, a phrase, an idea, style of writing, etc.
2. Use "I" statements.
3. DON'T say "I don't like..." or "You shouldn't do..." or "That's wrong..." Say "I stumbled" or "I bumped" on the phrase, idea... "I think it might flow easier if you said it this way..." or "I was confused by..." or "Here's how I interpreted it ... is that how you meant it?"
4. Be specific. Be positive. Be helpful.
5. End on a positive note—again with something you liked about it.

Writer Guidelines

- If you can bring a few extra copies to share while reading, it helps those who have hearing impairments.
- Since this is a writing group, as opposed to a book-discussion group or other forum, the writer is bringing his/her written words to get feedback from fellow writers. Any book or magazine should only be used as a reference for a workshop or as a literary guide for improving our writing skills.
- Writers should feel free to share his/her experiences, cultural background, beliefs and opinions written by him/herself without debate on the merits of those ideas.
- Writers should not exceed twenty minutes, including critique time. If the writing is an excerpt from a novel or other long piece, please give no more than a two or three sentence synopsis.
- It saves time if the writer listens to the suggestions of the others instead of defending his/her work. It's also a waste of negative energy. The critic is not God, he is just one person giving his unique perception and experience. It is his job to give you that. It's your job to decide what to do next.