

'How to Critique' Guidelines

1. After the manuscript/illustration to be critiqued has been submitted, the other members of the group are to post their critiques by the following Sunday.
2. Critiques are to be typed onto a **copy** of the original submitted manuscript/illustration using the **'Track Changes'** (<https://support.office.com/en-SG/article/track-changes-while-you-edit-024158a3-7e62-4f05-8bb7-dc3ecf0295c4>) tool in Word (for additional help see YouTube *How to use MS Word's Track Changes*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZY_m-KjLR8).
3. Do not read anyone else's critique before writing your own. It is more helpful to receive a number of fresh perspectives.
4. Critique comments should be respectful, constructive and encouraging.
5. The best way to critique is to read/view the manuscript/illustration when it is posted and then let it 'sit' with you for a while before writing your critique.
6. Members seek to provide honest feedback in a positive, constructive and encouraging manner. It helps to know the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript/illustration. A useful technique is the 'sandwich' method. Begin with a positive comment/insight, then provide constructive criticism including why something doesn't work and offering possibilities for change, and then end with a positive comment/insight.
7. Those receiving the critique should be aware that any suggestions offered are suggestions only and can be accepted or rejected.
8. When you are finished with your critique, rename the document to make clear who has provided the critique.
e.g. **CRITIQUE_YOURNAME**_NameofWriter_
TitleofStory_MonthYear
e.g. **CRITIQUE_MARGARET**_Anne Smith_The Horse's Tale_March 2015
9. Load your critique to the Dropbox folder as an updated file of the original file, so that all files related to a story can be kept together.
10. Follow-up discussion is allowed after all critiques have been received. If the writer needs to clarify any points he/she can contact members directly.
11. Once you have received all critiques delete your manuscript/illustrations and the critiques from the file on Dropbox.

Suggestions on 'How to Critique'

Critiques should be 'meaty' and should:

- Point out the strengths and weaknesses
- Address any specific questions the member may have asked
- Include potential solutions to problem areas
 - edit suggestions
 - ideas to improve plot or character
 - minor re-writes

For Writers - Address at least some of the following areas:

- title
- hook/opening
- character development
- story arc/problem/conflict
- dialogue
- language
- grammar and mechanics
- length and concept
- appropriateness for age group
- theme
- illustration potential

For Illustrators – Address at least some of the following areas:

- overall presentation
- continuity
- consistency
- subject matter
- perspectives
- composition
- marketability
- character development
 - in different narrative settings
 - doing different activities
 - showing different expressions & moods
- representations of children and/or animals
- style and attitude
 - competence
 - consistency
 - issues regarding reproduction
- originality
- uniqueness
- provocative

Further Reading

List of Questions for Critiques by Alayne Kay Christian includes points you can focus on when critiquing a story
<https://alaynekaychristian.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/list-of-questions-for-critiques.pdf>

How to Critique Fiction by Victory Crayne
<http://www.crayne.com/howcrit.html>

Critiquing for Maximum Benefit and Minimum Hurt Feelings (series of 7 parts) posted by Lisha Cauthen
<https://subitclub.wordpress.com/2015/03/10/critiquing-for-maximum-benefit-and-minimum-hurt-feelings-part-4-of-7-what-a-character/>

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