

## **Guidelines for Forming a Writing Critique Group**

How you form a writing group will vary due to why you want to do it and what you expect to get out of it. For this paper, we will discuss forming a critique group.

### **What you will need to do:**

1. Is it a general critique group or genre specific?
2. Where to meet? You will need a place that is relatively quiet but not so quite you will disturb others.
3. When to meet and how often?
4. Will you provide copies of your work to members ahead of time via E-mail or hand-outs or bring copies and read at the meeting?
5. Will it be more a working meeting or a social time? Are you serious?
6. You will need to develop rules for critiques and being critiqued
7. Do you want to eat while you're doing the critiques?
8. Follow the rules of critique groups (another handout)
9. Determine the method that you will critique during the sessions. For example: One person at a time talks or everyone can jump in when critiquing a paper.
10. Have some fun, too.

These questions must be addressed first.

### **Membership:**

1. The group should be 5 to 8 people in size.
2. The make up should be of people who are seriously interested in improving their writing
3. The members should be willing to openly participate and not just come for praise
4. You must feel comfortable with the members and like them.
5. The members should be there for encouragement and support of each other as well as the critiques.
6. You will need every ones phone numbers and e-mail addresses for emergencies
7. Members agree to seriously try to make all the meetings. (sickness, vacations, work and other things will interfere, but strive to make as many as possible. Make it a "standing meeting" on your schedule.
8. Appoint a member as the ex-facto leader to keep order and be the contact person for the group.

**The following RULES will help make it work smoothly.**

### **Writing Critique Group Rules**

Being in a critique group can be extremely valuable to a writer. Having this feedback can help make a manuscript and improve your writing. Getting in a good one is important in this age of high competition for the few publishing slots at publishers. However, there are rules that every critique group should follow to make the process work and these rules are for the members. Because the Georgetown Writer's College is having a one-day workshop on this in February, I thought I'd give you my thoughts on how to operate in a critique group. The following I consider the golden rules of the critique process. I hope they help you.

### **Rules for Critiquing**

- 1. Comment on the Text, not the author**
- 2. Speak from your own perspective**
- 3. Be willing to give honest feedback**
- 4. Remember the writer's work and the conversations about it in the group are Private**
- 5. Start with positive comments and end with positive comments**
- 6. Honor the writer's own voice**
- 7. Consider the writer's GOALS in asking for a critique**
- 8. Be specific with suggestions, but avoid being nitpicky**
- 9. Make your critique concise and leave time for others' comments**
- 10. Keep a sense of humor**

### **Rules for being Critiqued**

- 1. Be open minded**
- 2. Don't argue or defend your work—don't talk except to ask for clarification**
- 3. Be willing to receive feedback**
- 4. Identify what you are looking for in the critique**
- 5. Leave your ego at home**
- 6. Keep a sense of humor**
- 7. Learn to the praise not just the criticism**
- 8. Pay special attention to the comments that you hear frequently and take notes**
- 9. Remind yourself of the purpose of the critique**
- 10. Treat feedback like a gift from your mother-in-law. If you like it, use it with pride, if you don't, quietly toss it aside after she's gone.**

