

GETTING YOUR FEET WET

(easing into a critique group)

by Kate Wilson

Do you hesitate to join a small, personal critique group because you lack experience critiquing? Consider trying one of the internet-based open-to-anyone groups first. You'll find a wildly varied bunch of work to critique, and you'll get a wildly varied bunch of critiques of your own work, but you'll also have the opportunity to read many critiques and to learn from them something about what's helpful and what isn't. These groups may work for you, too, if you have very little time for critiquing, or if your availability is erratic.

The following two links are to long running, legitimate critique groups that are open to all comers and that include divisions for children's writers. Both are free, though Critique Circle has the option of paid membership with more perks.

<http://www.internetwritingworkshop.org/index.shtml>

YAWRITE is the children's/young adult section of this large email group. The only requirement is that each member must contribute twice a month, either critiques or subs of his/her work or both. (This freedom can cause glitches, with occasional influxes of new members who wish to sub without critiquing others' work, but it tends to even out over time.)

<http://www.critiquecircle.com/>

Critique Circle has been around for years and has a children's/YA "queue." Participants must register and must earn the privilege of posting their own work by critiquing others'. Members' submissions are posted on the website, but entry is password protected.