



Structuring a Critique Group

Things to Consider

Group structures vary to meet the needs of the individuals in the group. Consider the following as your group decides:

- Meeting Frequency and Location
 - Meet once a week
 - Meet once a month or bi-monthly
 - Use Zoom or other online group interfaces to help individuals when members are unable to travel due to weather. (Free Zoom accounts allow meetings up to 45 minutes. We recommend taking a break at 45 and have another member start the second session when you continue.)
 - Be consistent with time and location
 - 1 ½ hours or longer is needed, depending on the number of scheduled critiques
- Manuscripts Submission possibilities:
 - Submit ahead of time via email to provide opportunity to read the piece multiple times and to write notes that can be explained in person
 - Distribute at the session to hear it read aloud and receive oral critiques
- Decide on the number of manuscripts or pages per person to be discussed. Ways include:
 - Share manuscripts from two or more people
 - Spend entire time on one manuscript or 2-4 chapters from one person
 - Be flexible with individual projects/needs
- Number of Members
 - Numbers vary. Groups of four to eight people seem to be common, depending on the genre.
 - Consider the wait period between critiques for each participant
- Type(s) of Genre
 - Critiquing the same genre allows members to both use and apply skills inherent to that genre.
 - Allowing for different genres forces each member to broaden his/her knowledge in order to propose insightful critique comments.
- Member Expertise
 - Experienced: Writing experience comes from many different areas. Writers of different genres can easily transfer skills and learn new techniques.
 - Inexperienced: Members come to groups with diverse strengths and weaknesses regardless of experience. Experience evolves as members research writing practices or attend conferences and workshops