

## Peer Critique Groups

### Suggested Agenda

- 1) Choose a timekeeper (this is key!)
- 2) Introduce yourselves (30 sec each):
  - Name
  - Fun fact: hidden talent, 2 min of moment of fame, favorite dance move etc.
- 3) [For picture book groups]: Read manuscript aloud. (3-5 min)  
[For illustrators]: Choose one to share for critique.
- 4) Author listens and takes notes as group discusses. Start with individual thoughts then move into discussion. (10-12 min)

Some questions to consider include:

- What works?
- Does the plot develop logically? Does anything interrupt the flow and pull you out of the action?
- Does the main character have a clear problem or conflict to resolve?
- Do the characters feel believable, three-dimensional, and unique?
- Is there consistency in the voice, tense, and point of view?
- Is there a clear theme or universal idea?

- 5) Repeat. **Spend about 15 minutes on each manuscript.**

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## Peer Critique Groups Tips

### When giving comments:

- Everyone should respond to the work of other writers.
- Always begin your commentary by saying what works. Then consider what is raising questions for you about the work. Then make suggestions about what may need further thought. Try not to prescribe the answer for the writer.
- Be honest. Positive comments alone don't help anyone to make their story better.
- Be kind. Think about how you would react to a comment yourself before sharing it.
- Critiques should focus on the writing, not the writer.
- Focus on larger issues, such as character, voice, balance of scene and summary, dialogue, setting, desire, narrative arc, etc.
- Back up your comments with specific examples.
- Spend the same amount of time on everyone's work. If necessary, assign someone to be the timekeeper.
- During the critique, frame your criticism in the form of a question for the author.
- Do not try to rewrite someone else's story.

### When receiving comments:

- Don't take the feedback personally. Don't try to defend or explain your work while it is being critiqued.
- Wait until all comments are complete before responding or asking questions.
- Take notes, even if you disagree with the comments.
- Make sure you understand the comments. Ask for clarification if needed.
- Remember, you do not have to incorporate everyone's feedback. But take it home, let it simmer for a while, and you might be surprised what works after you've let the initial emotions around the comments subside.

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