

Guidelines for Participating in Critique Sessions

To get feedback on your writing

1. When it's your turn, tell us the type of work:
 - first chapter of a novel
 - personal essay
 - article
 - poem for a collection
 - play
 - meditation/reflection
2. Don't explain. Don't apologize. Just start reading.
3. When you're finished, take a deep breath while others make a few notes.
4. Leader will direct the feedback session. This is your time to sit back and listen.
5. Decide later which suggestions you will and will ignore.

To give feedback to other writers

1. When others read, notice what you think worked well.
2. Also notice what you think might be better.
3. Focus on the craft rather than the subject matter.
4. Make as many notes for the writer as you can. Phrase comments in the first person, as "I think" or "I didn't understand." Or ask a question, "What if you....?" rather than as an instruction, "You should...."
5. Join in the discussion when you want to. Say what you think, but don't insist. When there is disagreement about a certain point, the leader might ask for a show of hands so the the writer can get the reaction of the whole group and factor that into his decision.
6. Remember that no one is expected to do as you say, only to consider your suggestions.