

Critique Check List

For fiction pieces

- ___ Is there a hook at the beginning of the story to grab the reader's attention? Does it promise the reader something?
- ___ Are the characters believable and well developed?
- ___ Is the story well-paced with smooth transitions?
- ___ Does the writer use correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and structure?
- ___ Does the writer show rather than tell?
- ___ Does the plot move the story forward without places that drag?
- ___ Does the writer use strong nouns and verbs, avoiding passive voice, weak verbs, and overuse of adverbs and adjectives?
- ___ Does the writer avoid clichés, jargon and platitudes?
- ___ Does the writer use good description, imagery, and figurative language?
- ___ Does the writer use a consistent point of view in each scene?
- ___ Does the plot maintain the reader's interest?
- ___ Does the writer use dialogue, and does it read naturally? Do action beats replace dialogue tags?
- ___ Do details support the story?
- ___ Does the story come to an appropriate conclusion? Does the end fulfill the promise made in the lead?

For nonfiction pieces

- ___ Is there a hook at the beginning of the story to grab the reader's attention?
- ___ Does the piece deal with a provocative idea, or does it present a unique take on the subject?
- ___ Is the piece to the point, and does it stick with the subject or theme?
- ___ Is the piece well organized with smooth transitions? Is the writing clear and understandable?
- ___ Is there an appropriate use of quotes, statistics, and/or anecdotes, including any necessary crediting of sources?
- ___ Does the writer use correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and structure?
- ___ Does the writer show rather than tell?
- ___ Does the writer vary sentence length and type?
- ___ Does the writer use strong nouns and verbs, avoiding passive voice, weak verbs, and overuse of adverbs and adjectives?
- ___ Does the writer avoid preaching or telling the reader what to do, especially words like should, must, ought to, have to, etc.
- ___ Does the piece maintain the reader's interest?
- ___ Does the piece follow a logical sequence of events?
- ___ If dialogue is used, does it read naturally, and is it appropriate to the piece? Do action beats replace dialogue tags?
- ___ Does the piece come to a logical or appropriate conclusion? Does the ending leave you feeling satisfied or challenged?
- ___ Does the overall work have takeaway value?

For poetry

- ___ Does the poet convey what the poet is trying to say?
- ___ Does the poem maintain good rhythm and flow?
- ___ If traditional verse, does the poem adhere to form?
- ___ Does the poet use a fresh concept, imagery, or figurative language?
- ___ Does the poem appeal to the imagination or emotions or engage the reader's senses?