

How's My Writing: A Critiquing How-to and Hands-on Session

Presenter: Crystal Caudill, crystal@crystalcaudill.com

Use QR Code to sign up for Crystal's newsletter and receive a free novella.



Critiquing Basics

- I. What a critique is NOT
 - A. A chance to find and point out every _____ or _____ in a manuscript.
 - B. A _____, _____, or _____ check.
 - C. An opportunity to show _____

- II. What a critique IS
 - A. _____ helping another writer to find the _____ in their story.
 - B. _____ helping another writer to find areas for _____.
 - C. A chance to _____ another writer on their journey.
 - D. A look at the _____ aspects of the story.

- III. Why should we submit our work to be critiqued?
 - A. Others can help us to _____ what we _____ in our own writing.
 - B. So we can see where we need to _____ and where we are _____
 - C. So we can _____ for when the reviews come in one day.

IV. Things to keep in mind

- A. No story is for _____
- B. You want someone familiar with the _____ you are writing in.
- C. You want someone _____ or _____ in their writing journey and skill.
- D. Not everything said in the critique needs _____, discernment will be needed.

How to Critique

“Red means love—if your friends don’t mark your writing with a red pen, they don’t really love you.”

~ Former English Teacher

- I. Don’t change their _____
 - A. You can give examples of how you might rewrite the sentence to make it clearer or improve deep POV, but their word choices and sentence structure are a part of their writing style. Allow them to make the choice.
 - B. You can point out words they use over and over again, or if a sentence style is occurring too frequently: short sentences or fragment sentences
- II. Use the _____ Method
 - A. _____ a suggestion for improvement between two compliments
 - B. Make them genuine and specific
 - i. I like the way you described this setting. I felt right there!
 - ii. I struggled to connect with this character because they felt too perfect.
 - iii. I LOLed right here. So funny!

III. Look for what the writer is doing _____.

- A. Comment on it
- B. Be genuine
- C. Be specific

IV. Include your response as a _____

- A. I laughed out loud!
- B. I wonder if he's really the bad guy.

V. Notice where things can be _____

- A. KINDLY comment on it or ask questions
- B. Be specific
- C. Offer suggestions or examples for improvement
 - i. I'm not sure I understand what's going on here.
 - ii. I'm struggling to understand why the character did that.
 - iii. Could you describe the setting a little more?
 - iv. Is there a way you can sprinkle this backstory throughout? Maybe share "xyz" when she's talking with the hero on a date?

What to Look At (*see Guiding Questions Sheet)

- I. The scene/story opening
- II. Plot
- III. Character
- IV. Dialogue
- V. World-building/Setting
- VI. Writing

How to Find Critique Partners

- Get connected with a writing group
- Join professional organizations
- Make friends with other writers
- Pay for an online critique match organization