



11 Old York Road, Greenmount WA 6056
A Support Hub for Writers Everywhere

GUIDELINES FEEDBACK AND CRITIQUE

Summary of KSP Groups

Adult groups: \$5 per session for members or \$12 per session for non-members

Cash payment at each session is essential

Located at the Centre: 11 Old York Road, Greenmount WA 6056

Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Everyone welcome; no need to formally book.



KSP groups provide writers with the motivation to write regularly and offer the opportunity to receive and provide constructive feedback with other group members, plus give and receive general advice and tips, and share information regarding competitions or writing development websites and technical tools. Select groups also provide the opportunity for members to engage in writing exercises and be published in an annual anthology. All groups should provide a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Objectives of Feedback and Critique

Feedback and critique is designed to improve an individual's work with the aim of

- a) learning more about the process of revising and editing
- b) creating a work of high quality, publishable standard, and/or
- c) submitting to competitions.

Requirements

- Group members who wish to engage in feedback and critiquing of others' work must first read, sign and agree to the Group Members' Code of Conduct (provided by the facilitator).
- Feedback should be constructive, positive and delivered in appropriate and respectful language.
- Unsolicited feedback and/or critique is not acceptable; nor is insulting or disrespectful language.
- Every group member needs to adhere to the time structure set out by the Group Facilitator (generally a reading should not exceed five minutes, or 1,000 words), and respect their authority in leading the feedback discussion.
- Feedback and critique within any group session should be evenly distributed between those group members who would like to participate, so each individual receives an approximately equal share of time to others.

Breach of Code

If a member considers another group member or the facilitator to be breaching the Group Members' Code of Conduct, they should email KSP to request a copy of the Centre's Grievance Policy, and follow the recommended procedure to resolve the situation peacefully – invoking impartial mediation if necessary.



Guidelines

Criticism can make or break a writer and his/her writing. It can affect the confidence of the writer, the outcome of the piece of writing or the success or failure of a published book.

Put yourself in the shoes of the writer. How will your comments affect his/her attitude? A good rule of thumb is to start with a positive aspect, provide some constructive criticism, and end on a positive note. Further, please preserve the confidentiality of other members' work and always be polite and supportive. And remember, any feedback that you receive is subjective, and it's up to you as a writer to decide which comments to apply to your work.



As seen in the list below, there are many things to look for according to the type of writing and the feedback required, and these should be identified *before* a member begins to read so the listener is aware of what points to consider.

1) **Reading**

When reading your piece of writing it is important to first identify to the group what type of feedback you require, i.e. intensive, minimal, general etc.

Identify your genre and if you want specific attention paid to the grammar, authenticity of dialogue, tautology, punctuation, structure, level of interest in a particular character etc. Estimate the time your reading will take and inform the group.

The time allowed for feedback will depend on what is required (a short story ready to send for a competition will require closer analysis).

Distributing copies of the work to listeners makes it easier for them to offer criticism.

Important note: *Please be conscious of other group members when reading and stay within your allocated time, as exceeding it will limit others who may also wish to read and receive feedback.*

2) **Listening** (listening to a piece of writing is an art that is learned)

Write notes as you listen – your comment and refer to where it appears in the piece. When you present your comments, first mention some positives (i.e. 'the use of ... is particularly effective').

Ask questions to clarify your feedback (would you please explain why you chose ... or what point are you making when you say...?).

Offer suggestions in your own opinion (remember it is only your opinion and should not include your personal values), i.e. 'I feel you could find a better word to describe...'

Be positive in your comments, i.e. 'perhaps the story would be stronger told in the 1st person'.

Be considerate in your criticism. It will be your turn soon.

Important note: *Please be respectful when listening, and do not engage in other activities such as talking/whispering with others or typing on a mobile phone.*

3) Examples of levels of feedback

A *heartfelt piece* written to convey an emotion or a moving personal experience, may not need any comment other than, 'It's a beautiful piece of writing' or 'I understand your feelings'.

With a *piece to entertain* e.g. a humorous article for a magazine, you would perhaps consider if it achieves its aim and entertains the reader.

With *poetry*, you might ask whether it conforms to the nature of poetry.

With a *short story* you might ask whether it satisfies the traditional requirements of short story writing. Does it have a beginning, middle and end, satisfying conclusion etc.?

With an *essay, report or technical piece*, you might consider whether it conveys its message with clarity and conciseness.

With a piece of *autobiographical work*, you might consider if the writing engages the reader and relates in some way to his/her experience, e.g. through the senses etc.

CHECKLIST TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING FEEDBACK/CRITIQUE
*(the following points cover all writing genres,
however some are more relevant to autobiographical writing)*

- Was the title appropriate?
- Opening sentence: did it grab you?
- Opening paragraph: did you want to read on?
- Is the word usage appropriate?
- Does the writing flow?
- Does it have pace and rhythm?
- Is the language appropriate to the time, theme, setting etc.?
- Was there enough to hold your interest?
- Is there a main theme?
- Is the setting appropriate to the story?
- Characterisation: could you visualise and find interest in him/her?
- Is the dialogue and dress appropriate?
- Do you feel you know the characters?
- Are the chosen names appropriate?
- Do the characters help to develop the plot?
- Does the writer show rather than tell?
- Are conflicts discovered and resolved?
- Are there sufficient 'hooks' to hold your interest?
- Is the story entertaining?
- Has the writer left enough to the imagination?
- Is the writing clear, consistent and in time sequence?
- Is the use of words economical?
- Does the writing have power?
- Are there any distractions or embellishments?
- Does the writing appeal to your intellect and imagination?
- Is the use of tenses correct?
- Is the point of view consistent?
- Has the writer developed an affinity with you?