

The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 16 – Critique Feedback Checklist

Checklist Items	Your Assessment		
	Works Well	Needs Work	Poor
<i>The type of feedback will be different for various aspects of technique. (See earlier checklists for plot, dialogue, characters, scenes etc.) This more general checklist will give members of a critique group some idea of what to look for in a scene of fiction or a short story.</i>			
Is there a sense of connection with the reader? (Does the reader immediately become engrossed in the action? Do we engage with the main character?)			
Does the opening arouse curiosity or interest?			
Is the setting (place and time) clear and believable?			
Do the characters come to life? (If not, what does the reader see as a potential problem?)			
Does the story move along at a good pace? (If there are any slow sections, where are they and why do they seem slow?)			
Is the general tone and style appropriate for the genre? (e.g. chick-lit, humor, mystery/thriller)			
Are the characters appropriate for the genre? (If not, why not?)			
Does the dialogue sound realistic and move at a good pace? (If not, why not? How could it be improved?)			
Are speech tags, actions, direct speech, thoughts, emotions and body language balanced in a scene of dialogue? (If not, is any one of these used too much?)			
How is the mood established? Does the setting contribute to this?			
Is description filtered into the story through the viewpoint character, or is it unnecessary/too flowery/dull?			
Is it clear from the beginning whose viewpoint we are in?			
Does the writer show, rather than tell (most of the time)?			
Is there plenty of emotional depth? (That is, can the reader identify emotionally with what the characters are going through?)			
Are there any obvious errors with background, setting, history, etc. (any areas that may need more research)			
If this is a self-contained scene, does the scene have an inciting incident? Does the viewpoint character have a goal?			
Does tension build throughout the scene/story?			
Does the reader care about what happens to the character(s)? (This is subjective. If the reader can't identify enough with the characters to care what happens to them, he/she should try to identify why not. For example, is the problem they face too insignificant?)			
Is there something at stake for the main character? Does the author raise the stakes as the story continues?			
Does the reader want to keep turning pages to find out what happens next?			
If this is a short story or the final scenes, are all loose ends tied up satisfactorily?			
Is the ending satisfying? (Is it clichéd? Does it fizzle out? Does it leave the reader wanting more, or feeling short-changed?)			