

The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 15 – Organizing a Writer's Critique Group

Critique Group Checklist	
Done	<i>A writer's critique group offers support and social interaction with other writers, but its main purpose is to provide feedback on writing technique and plotting, with the intention of helping all members to develop their skills. These are just some of the aspects of establishing and running a critique group that you should consider. Check off each one as you consider it.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where will the meetings to be held? (One venue all the time? Private house or public hall? Members to take turns hosting? Take into consideration that some public venues [such as the back room of a restaurant] can lack privacy for readings.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you want a group that focuses on a specific genre? (e.g. romance, mysteries, children's books?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	How big will the group be? (A social group can be large, but a critique group usually works better if there are not too many people in it, so everyone gets a chance to comment/read work/request feedback.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	How often will meetings be held? (Monthly? Two-Weekly? Weekly?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On what day and at which time will the group meet? (Morning, afternoon or evening? Weekday or weekend?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who 'owns' the group? (The person who established it? Is it a loosely-knit group with no one leader? Who makes the decisions about the future of the group or the way that it is run?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the group open to new members? (Is there a process on admitting or voting in new members? Does a place open up if someone leaves? What if someone wants to come back after an absence?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Must group members have reached a certain level of competence before being admitted, or are beginners welcome? (Groups comprised solely of beginners often find it difficult to get quality feedback to help writers grow.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will refreshments be served? (if so, how will this be organized? Roster? Host provides? Restaurant? Snacks or full meal?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will refreshments be served at the beginning or end of the meeting?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who will run the meetings? (Is there a different organizer for each meeting, or will one person be elected each year?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there going to be a group newsletter? (If so, who will collate it? Who will contribute? Who will send it?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you plan to have a regular meeting format, or will the structure of the following meeting be planned each time the group meets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the group have one main critique session, or will the meeting be divided up into different sessions? (e.g. technique, plotting, promotion.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will there be a set topic for each meeting or will any member be encouraged to discuss any topic?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will critiquing of work be organized? (Will work be sent to group members to read and make notes before the meeting, or will work be read aloud? Will comments/critiques be emailed or passed on to the writer? Note that the quality of the critique is often better if people have time to read it away from the group first.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the group want to plan yearly or twice-yearly retreats or workshops for members?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the meeting allow time for social interaction? (Most groups do this naturally - the hardest part is to ensure that regular, quality critiquing occurs!)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Other Aspects of Critique Group Organization?</i>