

Setting Up A Writers' Critique Circle (I)

Society of Singapore Writers First Friday Writers' Corner
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Introduction to the Material and Method for Tonight

Rather than lecturing, we will be using a "discussion-plenary" method tonight. We will break into small groups of 4-5 people and discuss a question, then meet together to share what we have found out.

I will provide some materials from writing resources on the Internet that can help guide discussion.

Our overall goal is to come to understanding about the role of a Writers' Critique Circle (also called a "Critique Club", "Writers' Circle" and "Writers' Support Group"), how to set one up, and what kinds of basic rules we would need to set down (if any).

Part 1 – Support Options for Writers

In your groups, introduce yourselves, and share your experiences about writing groups. Which experiences helped you? Which hindered you?

Appoint yourselves a Scribe, who will summarize your experiences and share it with the main group.

The members of our group:

Our experiences:

Helpful

Hindering

Plenary Discussion

Part 2 – Scoping out a Writers’ Critique Circle

Handout: “Critique Groups and Writers' Groups” by Marg Gilks

In your groups again, review and discuss the handout. If you were setting up a WCC (what Marg calls a “Critique Group”), what kinds of limitations would you impose and why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

WCC Scope:

Open Membership

Closed Membership

Open Genre

Specific Genre

Online/email

In-person

Same skill level

Different skill levels

Plenary Discussion:

Part 3 – Managing a WCC Meeting

Handouts: “Setting Up a Writers' Circle” by Jo Parfitt
“How To Choose a Critique Club” by Gigi Rosenberg

In your groups again, review and discuss the handouts. How would you make best use of a WCC? What disciplines would you impose on yourself? What rules would you ask the group to follow? Refer back to your answers for Question 1, and identify how you would set up the kinds of experiences that helped you most, and avoid the kinds of experiences that hindered you most.

WCC Disciplines and Rules:

Encourage

Avoid

Plenary Discussion:

Part 4 (if time permits) – An Introduction to the Art and Craft of Criticism

If time permits, we will have an open discussion on different methods of critiquing an author's work, and what to keep in mind when doing critiquing, and receiving critiques. This will be discussed in greater detail in Part II of this series.

Plenary Discussion:

Resources

Here are some online resources you can use if you want to think further about setting up a Writers' Critique Circle:

["Starting a writers' group" by D. Raposa](#)

["Starting a writers' group" by Pamela S Thibodeaux](#)

["Writer's Tips: joining a critique group, pro and cons" by Michael Pollick](#)

["Writer's Critique Group–Guidelines" by Patricia Harrelson](#)