

Guidelines for Critiquing

1. Purpose

PINAWOR exists in order to help its members to improve their creative writing. All members desire to reach their full potential, either for their private enjoyment or with the aim of publishing for profit, and group critiquing makes a major contribution to any writer's improvement.

2. Principles of group critiquing

All members present at each meeting should express their opinions on the works that are presented. Even those members who are not yet familiar with the techniques and terminology of literary criticism can state how they as readers react to the work. Authors are honored by the expression of a reaction from any member.

Group critiquing is more helpful than one-on-one discussion because it promotes debate.

Praise is pleasant but criticism is crucial.

3. Basis for critiquing

Members help writers by commenting on many aspects: characterization, setting, plot, dialog, style, vocabulary, syntax and grammar, etc., and can also question factual points. Members must refrain from taking issue with the writer's attitude or point of view, particularly on political or religious matters, however strongly they may disagree with it.

Members should not repeat a point already made by another member. Statements about a personal experience similar to the one described are not usually helpful.

More detailed suggestions can be found on the Pinawor website under the heading of "Ideas for Feedback."

4. Poetry

Poetry is always more difficult to critique because of its personal nature, but even those members who are less concerned with it can state how they react to a poem and what effect it has on them.

5. Presentation

Members will be able to comment more readily if the work is well presented. Many authors rehearse their presentation in advance in order to ensure that they can read their pieces fluently and clearly, and within the allotted five minutes. Reading a piece in front of an audience and improving one's presentation skills are all part of being a writer.