

Short Story Peer Review

Read your peer's story closely. The first reading: make no notes; just read holistically. The second reading, pay attention to the following questions and answer them thoroughly (on your own paper). Remember, your goal is to help your fellow writers see their stories through a reader's eyes. Your comments should be specific, honest, and helpful. Do your best to explain your thoughts in order to help the writer.

Story Structure

1. What is this story's central conflict? Who/what are the opposing forces? What are the stakes over which they battle/conflict?
2. What event introduces the conflict (what is the inciting incident/narrative hook)?
3. What event is the epiphany/climax/crisis moment? The final battle that determines the outcome of the war/conflict?
4. Does the story come to a satisfactory conclusion? Explain.
5. What are the main character's psychological and moral needs?
6. Describe the moment of the main character's self-revelation.
7. How has the protagonist changed/grown from the beginning of the story to the end?
8. Does every part of the story advance the plot and fill in back-story details without going into tedious explanation? Identify any areas that tell too much and show too little.

Characterization

9. Are the characters and their problems believable? Identify any areas in the story where you question character motivations, words, or actions.
10. What's the balance between direct characterization (telling) and indirect characterization (showing)? (Estimate a percentage.)

Dialogue

11. Is the dialogue believable? Note any areas where the dialogue seems stilted or mechanical or doesn't make sense.
12. Does every bit of dialogue progress the plot? Note any areas that do not.
13. Does the dialogue incorporate action, reveal emotion?

Point of View

14. What point of view (POV) does the writer use? List an example.
15. Does the POV remain consistent throughout the story? Identify any areas where it deviates.

Craft & Style

16. Identify exceptional use of imagery.
17. Identify any use of Sound & Sense devices (aural imagery).
18. Identify any instances of foreshadowing.

Writing Conventions

19. In what tense does this story begin? (present or past) Identify any areas where the tense shifts randomly.
20. Note any spelling errors, grammatical, mechanical, or usage errors.