

Rules for Written Submissions at Critique Sessions

We are a friendly group, dedicated to helping each other, as individuals, improve our craft and grow as writers. To that end, a few basic rules, or standards, are necessary.

As the name of the group, Sarasota Fiction Writers, suggests, we require that the submissions to be critiqued be fiction, e.g., novels, short stories, biographical fiction. Simply put, Fiction Writers write Fiction. There are many other writing groups in the Sarasota area that specialize in, and welcome, memoirs, vignettes, and other forms of non-fiction.

In the interest of creating a pleasant experience, as well as providing time for everyone to be heard, participants at the critique sessions should follow these simplified guidelines:

1. Fiction, not Non-Fiction. Submissions should be complete, or excerpts-in-progress from, stories. Stories include a beginning, a middle, and an ending, and should feature a main character, motivation, goals, obstacles, tension, and resolution.
2. No Offensive Material. Submissions should not contain pornography, author's rants or polemics, or gratuitous disrespect. It should not be a deliberately persuasive piece regarding religion or politics.
3. Proofread It First. Writers should proofread submissions before sharing them with the group. Try to avoid missing words, spelling errors, and problems with punctuation and grammar. There are several software packages available that can help you perform these tasks. No one expects perfection, but please work with your piece. Note: It is often helpful to have someone, or some software, read it to you ahead of time, while you follow along.
4. Length. Submissions should not exceed ten pages, to allow time for multiple participants to be critiqued. On nights where there are many submissions, the number of pages reviewed may be reduced.

5. Line Numbers. Numbering each line of the submission is required, so comments/criticisms can easily be tracked by everyone attending the session. The tool to generate line numbers is usually found in the “Layout” menu.
6. Double Spaced. Submissions must be double-spaced. This leaves room for critiquers’ comments, questions, and corrections on printed copies.
7. Please Don’t Argue. We know this is tempting! At the critique sessions, unless a question is asked of the author, he/she should accept criticism without arguing or defending his/her position. If the author does not understand the point being made, it is okay to ask the critiquer to clarify said point, as long as the request isn’t argumentative.