The Creative Process & Feedback

Refer to the ‘Creative Exercise’ worksheet for writing prompts.

What to Look For: Fiction

- Is the opening gripping/interesting? Does it start in the middle?
- Is there a lot of narrative summary instead of scenes? (Does the author summarize a lot rather than show the action?)
- Is there conflict? Does the conflict build? Where is the climax?
- Are the characters interesting or flat? What motivates the characters and how is that shown in the narrative?
- Is the dialogue believable? Does it move the story forward?

What to Look For: Poetry

- Does the author use a lot of abstractions instead of concrete nouns/imagines?
- Is the poem static? (Does is move in time, place, ideas, zoom in or out, etc?)
- How successful are line/stanza breaks? (Line break places emphasize on last/first words.)
- Is the poem wordy?

What to Look For: Creative Non-Fiction

- Does the voice of the piece appear to be an authority on the subject?
- Has the author considered the audience appropriately?
- Are transitions from one thought to the next logical and coherent?
- How original is the essay?

What to Look For: Playwriting

- Is the dialogue all moving the action / conflict forward?
- Is the exposition (relationships, date, time, place, etc) delivered naturally?
- Have you blurred the lines of stage and film?
- Are symbols used consistently throughout?
- Are stage directions clear, concise, and necessary?

What to Look For: General Tips

- Is everything necessary? Is anything missing? Is it in a coherent order?
- SHOW don’t TELL
- Clarity and Continuity – beginning, middle, ending; transitions; point of view
- Language:
  - Use: rhythm, imagery, sensory details, vivid verbs
  - Avoid: redundancy, over-use of adjectives and adverbs, wordiness
**Point of View Basics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrator Knows:</th>
<th>Narrator Doesn’t Know:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Person</strong> (main character or witness)</td>
<td>Knows only their own experiences and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Person Omniscient</strong></td>
<td>Knows everything about the external world and internal world of the characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Person Limited</strong></td>
<td>Knows everything that a specific character knows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Person “Fly on the Wall”</strong></td>
<td>Knows everything external happening in a certain location.</td>
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- **3rd Person Warnings:**
  - Be careful not to switch to different kinds of 3rd POV.
  - If you’re following one character for most of the story, don’t randomly switch to another for periods of time.

- **Distance:** How close is the narrator to the character(s)? Is the narrator formal and distance? Or intimate and close? Are you switching between distances?
  - **Distant:** Mr. Johnson stood outside in his thick jacket on the cold December day.
  - **Medium:** Bill Johnson shivered despite the warm jacket protecting him from the December chill.
  - **Close:** Bill’s feet were numb and he wished he’d worn warmer socks.

**Important Terms:**

- **Protagonist** – the character with a goal or objective. The main character.
- **Antagonist** – a character who acts against or influences the protagonist.
- **Flat Character** – a character without defining attributes, without motivation (versus **round character** who is fully developed).
- **Static Character** – a character who doesn’t change over the story (versus a **dynamic character** who does change).
- **Climax** – the moment when the protagonist must make a decision and/or change.
- **Stanza** – a group of lines in a poem.
- **Lyricism** – a quality of language created by the sounds of words through alliteration, assonance, rhythm, etc
- **Metaphor** – a comparison that does not use like or as.
- **Simile** – a comparison using like or as.
- **Adverb** – a word that modifies a verb, usually ending in -ly.
- **Adjective** – a word that modifies a noun.
- **Tone** – the emotion created by word voice and sentence structure.
- **Voice** – the personality, cadence, vernacular, etc of the narrator.
- **Passive Verbs:** (caution: avoid passive voice)
  - **Passive Voice:** The cat was bitten by the dog.
  - **Active Voice:** The dog bit the cat.