



SWWV Writers' Groups

Guidelines for critiquing and giving feedback

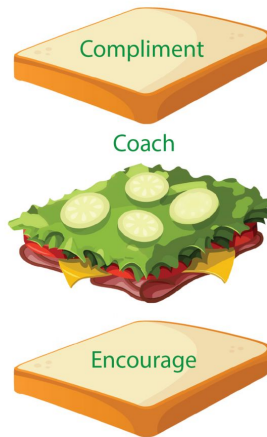
Writing can be a lonely process for many writers. It is a solitary activity by its very nature. Writers' Groups can be an excellent way for writers to share their works and ideas and to receive feedback from members of the group.

Giving feedback is often referred to as 'critiquing', 'constructive criticism' or 'reviewing'. What ever word your Writers' Group chooses to use, feedback needs to be given in a way that recognises where the writer is at in her writing career, appreciates that we all have different writing styles and is culturally sensitive. It also needs to offer helpful suggestions for improvement or further development.

Groups are not a mutual admiration society but it is important that feedback critiques the writing and does not criticise the writing.

When critiquing work, consider title, theme, plot, characterization, dialogue, action, and vocabulary. Is it suited to the genre? Does it remind you of works written by other authors? Look at sentence and paragraph structure in prose; rhythm and rhyme in poetry. How did the work make you feel? Did the work affect you? What was your emotional response to the piece? If not, why not? If so, why?

It is helpful to follow the 'sandwich' analogy when giving feedback.



The top slice of bread gives a positive comment about the work, the sandwich filling is more detailed feedback about a specific issue or part of the text and what can be improved, and the bottom slice of bread is a broad comment about the whole piece.