GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEWS

Instructions for peer reviews are provided in Chapter 18 (pp. 490–496).

For the Writer
Prepare two or three questions you would like your peer reviewer to address while responding to your draft. The questions can focus on some aspect of your draft that you are uncertain about, on one or more sections where you particularly seek help or advice, or on some feature that you particularly like about your draft, or on some part you especially wrestled with. Write out your questions and give them to your peer reviewer along with your draft.

For the Reviewer
I. Read the draft at normal reading speed from beginning to end. As you read, do the following:
   A. Place a wavy line in the margin next to any passages that you find confusing, that contain something that doesn’t seem to fit, or that otherwise slow down your reading.
   B. Place a “Good!” in the margin next to any passages where you think the writing is particularly strong or interesting.

II. Read the draft again slowly and answer the following questions by writing down brief explanations of your answers.
   A. Plot: What are the contrarieties, tensions, or conflicts in this story?
      1. How might the writer heighten or clarify the tension in the story?
      2. How might the writer improve the structure or pacing of scenes and the connection between these events? If you were to expand or reduce the treatment given to any events, which would you change and why?
      3. How could the writer use chronological order, flashbacks, or flash-forwards more effectively?
   B. Characters: How might the writer make the characters and their functions more vivid and compelling?
      1. Where might the writer provide more information about a character or describe the character more fully?
      2. Where might the writer use dialogue more effectively to reveal character?
   C. Setting: How might the writer use setting more effectively to create contrasts or convey thematic significance? Where might the writer add or revise details about setting?
   D. Theme: What do you see as the So what? or significance of this story?
      1. What insight or revelation do you get from this story?
2. How could the story’s thematic significance be made more memorable, powerful, or surprising? Should the writer comment more explicitly on the meaning or significance of the story or leave more for you to grasp on your own?

E. Title and opening paragraphs: How could the writer improve the title? How could the opening paragraphs be made more effective to hook the readers’ interest and prepare them for the story to follow?

F. Language and details: Where do you find examples of specific language, including memory-soaked or revelatory words? Where and how could the writer use specific language more effectively?

G. If the writer has prepared questions for you, respond to his or her inquiries.

H. Briefly summarize in a list what you see as the chief strengths and problem areas in the draft.
   1. Strengths
   2. Problem Areas

III. Read the draft one more time. Place a check mark in the margin wherever you notice problems in grammar, spelling, or mechanics (one check mark per problem).