

Participating in a Creative Writing Workshop

Some helpful ways to begin a comment in workshop:

1. I love this piece. It is [adjective, adjective, and adjective]. I like how it [verb, verb, etc.].
2. The strongest part of this piece was here. I think it was the strongest because [reference to imagery, voice, language, character, etc].
3. I could really relate to this piece because _____, and the author did a good job of getting me to feel this way through/by _____.
4. Since this part of the piece worked so well, I was wondering where else the author could make more use of that technique/image/voice, etc.
5. There were moments in the piece where I felt a little lost, where I wasn't sure what the author was trying to tell me. Here they are.
6. I was wondering if the author could try doing this: [Brief, clear description of an idea or a suggested change].
7. The subject matter of/some moments in the piece offended me a little bit, and I would like to see the author address that possible reaction somehow. Should we feel that way as readers, or is he/she trying for another response?
8. If the author were to attempt another draft, what I would like to see most in it is _____.

Some unhelpful ways to begin a comment in workshop:

1. I love this piece. I don't know why—I just do.
2. The whole piece was strong. Just overall, it worked.
3. I could really relate to this piece on a personal level, so I love it.
4. This is the only part I really liked. The rest of it didn't do it for me. Just my opinion.
5. This part was really awful. I mean, really?

6. Here's what the author should do: [long, drawn-out descriptions and lengthy suggestions that only you can follow and are probably more appropriate for your own writing].

7. This piece is sexist/racist/classist/homophobic/offensive to the religious, the disabled, and/or everyone else, and is therefore irredeemable. I refuse to talk about it, and I will no longer read this author's work.

8. This author shouldn't waste his/her time on this piece—it's going nowhere.