

THE WRITER COMMUNITY'S  
GUIDE TO

# Critique Partners



# 1

## *What is a Critique Partner?*

- A critique partner (CP) is someone that you share your writing with for critique on a regular basis. It is a reciprocal relationship so they also share their work with you for critique.
- It is different to a beta reader relationship as it is a much longer term relationship. You may work together for many years on multiple WIPs and because of this your CP will know your stories and writing style inside and out, allowing them to give effective and helpful critique.
- A CP relationship should be open, honest and supportive - you are there to help each other become better writers and make your story the best it can be.

## 2

# *Finding your Critique Partner*

- There are some websites that help you find a critique partner:
  - [scribophile.com](http://scribophile.com)
  - [critiquematch.com](http://critiquematch.com)
- Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram & Twitter are a great places to find a CP - spend time building up a following of other writers, share your work and then ask your followers that write your genre and like your work if they would be open to a CP relationship.
- You can also follow [#findmywritingcommunity](https://www.instagram.com/findmywritingcommunity/) on Instagram and introduce yourself and ask for a critique partner.

# 2

## *Finding your Critique Partner*

- Here at The Writer Community we also want to help you find your CP.
- Check out #TheWriterCommunity's posts aiming to match you up by genre:
  - YA/NA/MG CP matching with @raelynnfry
  - Fantasy/ Sci-Fi CP matching with @skyehorn\_author
  - Romance/ Women's Lit CP matching with @meganbethdavies
  - All other genre CP matching with @author\_s.alexis

# 3

## *Working with your Critique Partner*

- First, make sure you have the time and energy to devote to one or more CP relationships, they will be relying on your feedback, encouragement and support as you will on theirs, so make sure it doesn't become a one sided relationship.
- Agree on what you will share and when. Some people swap entire manuscripts while others swap chapters, there is no right or wrong way, just agree to what works for you.
- Give yourself realistic deadlines where possible and always communicate to your CP if you need more time.

# 3

## *Working with your Critique Partner*

- A CP relationship isn't all about sharing words, it is also about being there for each other to brainstorm ideas, help each other through writer's block and encourage each other to the finish line. Set up an open line of communication and even schedule regular calls each week or month so that you have the space to do this.
- Be honest. If the CP relationship isn't working for you, tell the other person that. Finding the right CP can be a trial and error process, but that's okay to say "this isn't working" and try to find someone else. It's likely if it doesn't work for you then you aren't the right CP for them either.

# 4

## *Critique Partner Roadmap*

- First meeting
  - Establish what you each want from the relationship. Is it regular writing critique? Story development? Or just encouragement & support?
  - Get to know each other's stories - a great CP knows their partner's story inside and out, use this first meeting to introduce your CP to your story.
  - Set a cadence for how often you want to meet and when, as well as when you want to share work and how long you might need to critique. Setting all these expectations upfront can really help you stay organized along the way.
  - Leave with a plan - what will you share with each other first? Agree to look at this by the next meeting.

# 4

## *Critique Partner Roadmap*

- Second and third meetings
  - Discuss the work you shared and elaborate on your critique to each other - this is the perfect time to iron out any differences in critique style, did you feel that they didn't give enough context or gave you no plan to make it better. Raise this now so they can improve going forward. Don't call it quits on the first try. Keep the line of communication open and you might be surprised.
  - Check in on whether the communication cadence is working for you and adjust if needed.



# 4

## *Critique Partner Roadmap*

- Fourth and fifth meetings
  - Hopefully by now you are settling into a good pattern of working and communicating with your CP. Make sure you discuss anything that isn't working and find a solution so you can move forward. If something is working, make a plan to continue this.
  - If by now you don't feel like this person is the right CP for you, that is ok! Not every CP relationship works out - what is important is that you let them know now so that you do not waste your time or theirs. Be gracious - you might not want to critique with this person but you do not want to lose their friendship.

# 5

## *Questions for your Critique Partner*

- Does this character feel fully-developed?
- Is there enough tension built up in this scene?
- Does the dialogue feel natural or forced?
- Are my character's goals clear enough to follow?
- Does my first page grab your attention?
- Is the blurb of my book too telling?
- Does the cover design match what is currently on the market and catch your attention?
- Am I showing enough in this scene rather than telling?
- Does this relationship / friendship feel genuine?

# 5

## *Questions for your Critique Partner*

- What tone does this chapter/scene/manuscript have upon first read?
- What is your impression of this character at this point in the story?
- What do you think the message of the story is?
- At any point, is anything invisible to you (setting, character features)?
- Does the world make sense?
- Is there anything you wish you got more of information wise (backstory, world-building, character description, setting, etc.)?
- Is there anything in what you read that takes you out of the story?

# 6

## *Giving & Receiving Critique*

- Giving Critique
  - Be positive - it's so easy to pick out the bad stuff but make sure you also tell them what you love so that they don't lose heart and just change everything.
  - Be specific - it is not helpful to give vague critique. Make sure you are really clear about what isn't working and why. Give examples, but avoid rewriting their work.
  - Be constructive - always make sure your critique leaves the person with a roadmap of how to make it better.

# 6

## *Giving & Receiving Critique*

- Receiving Critique
  - Remember it isn't personal - our stories are a piece of our soul so any criticism can feel like a personal attack, but it isn't. Always keep that in mind when reading their feedback
  - Their critique is a gift - your CP has taken time out of their writing to give you feedback - that is amazing. Remember they are doing it because they genuinely want to help you be a better writer and make your story the best it possibly can be.
  - Don't be in a rush - all stories go through multiple edits. Don't feel disheartened if on the first few drafts your CP finds loads of errors and plot holes - that is just the process.



DID YOU FIND THIS USEFUL?

FOLLOW

@THE\_WRITER\_COMMUNITY

& THE FOUNDERS:

@MEGANBETHDAVIES

@SKYEHORN\_AUTHOR

@AUTHOR\_S.ALEXIS

@RAELYNNFRY