



Writer's Workshops

A writer's workshop (or peer response) is a time for writers to receive feedback on their drafts. It's a time to read carefully, think critically, and be thorough. The more you put into a workshop, the more you will get out of it. As a writer, if you are putting in a great effort in responding to your peers, they are going to be more likely to take you seriously and return the favor. As a reader/responder, you will actually improve your own writing because the very act of reading and responding to another student's writing helps you to think critically about your own work.

Workshops are the primary way that a writer can get good, solid feedback from several different readers. Participating in a workshop online is a wonderful opportunity. It allows you to hear from lots of different students, who will give you an honest reader's perspective on how you're doing so far on your draft. Workshops work best when everyone puts in a good effort.

Some guidelines to consider for the writer:

Make sure that you provide a draft that is as full as you can make it

Keep in mind that everyone is drafting (and every writer's drafting process is unique)

Don't feel shy or embarrassed by a draft that is very rough

Some guidelines to consider for the responder:

Take time to read the draft carefully

Keep in mind that it *is* a draft

Be honest but not harsh

Don't try to be the teacher or an editor -- just give your honest reactions as a reader

Be specific -- instead of just saying "good," say "this is good because (fill in the blank)"

Tips for responding:

Take your time and read through each student drafts, responding with thorough explanations. Usually, you will have questions to consider. Make notes on the writer's paper, respond to each question specifically, and write a little note at the end with any overall thoughts. (Every student in the class should respond to at least two drafts.)

Before you start, be sure to read the article by Richard Straub called “Responding – Really Responding – To Other Students' Writing [Responding -- Really Responding -- To Other Students' Writing](#). Have fun with your writer's workshop and be sure to take all of the good feedback you get and apply it to your next draft!