**OCWW Anthology: Critique Approaches**

Here is a system we recommend for the initial critique of a work, whether by a critique group member, an editor, or the author's own self-critique.

**What are the strengths of this draft?**

*This sets a positive note for the review and informs the author of elements of the material that can be preserved and built upon. Examples: a unique main character, an engaging plot, a fascinating picture of another time or place.*

**In one or two sentences, what is this story about?**

*This lets the author know how well (or poorly) her/his work is being understood by the critic/editor.*

**How would you (the reader/critic) describe the main character and how does that character change, if at all?**

*This lets the author know how the main character is being viewed—readers may see characters differently than authors do. It can also lead to dialogue about character development.*

**What changes in this story?**

*This informs the author about how clearly his/her plot is being understood by the critic/editor. It can lead to meaningful dialogue about how to enhance the plot.*

**What is the climax of the story?**

*Does the critic/editor see the climax at the same point as the author? If not, does it matter?*

**What aspects of the story work for you?**

*The critic/editor highlights the story's strong points (such as, a character or characters, dialogue, wordsmithing, symbolism, etc.)*

**What parts of the story could work better for you?**

*The critic/editor notes aspects of the story that would make it better for them—such as unclear passages, more likeable hero/heroine, a scene where tension stops building, or false notes in facts or dialogue or narration that pull the reader out of the story.*

**Basic presentation notes**

*The critic/editor should make the author aware of any violations of professional presentation that would earn an instant rejection from an agent or publishing house editor. These include (but aren't limited to):*

• Verb tense or POV confusion

• Manuscript formatting (12point Times New Roman, double spaced, one-inch margins, indented paragraphs).

• Grammar and spelling

• Factual errors (such as in settings, historical notes)

**Other ideas**

• Give the author at least one idea for improving the plot of this story.

• Give the author at least one idea for improving a character or characters in this story.

• Give the author at least one idea for improving the literary or entertainment value of this story.