**A Checklist for Critiquing Fiction**

**The Process:**

* Let the author know if this is not your favorite type of story.
* Write down your impressions as a reader (listener)
* Try to give feedback on what could be changed
* Give examples of improvements, if possible
* Praise where praise is due
* Never criticize the author personally
* Critique as you would want to be critiqued

**Things to look for:**

1. **Opening** – Does it grab your attention? Present the protagonist’s main problem? Proper balance of action, dramatization, narrative?
2. **Conflict** – Emotional conflict within the character? Between characters? Too much, too little?
3. **Plot** – Clear and believable? Time and place clear? Start and end at the right place? Are all scenes necessary? Unconvincing coincidences? Too many flashbacks? Too many subplots, not enough? Pacing? Resolution of conflict? Does action move plot forward? Is ending satisfying?
4. **Setting** – Is description ‘real’? Too much, too little? Enough sensory description?
5. **Characterization** – Do names fir characters? Do actions fit time and place? Is it consistent? Background detailed enough? Complex enough? Presented in small pieces? Did protagonist undergo change? Is villain one-sided?
6. **Dialogue** – Consistent with personality? Expressive of personality? Can you easily tell who’s speaking? No long monologues? Easy to speak but not so real it’s distracting? Appropriate for time and place?
7. **Point of view** – Single POV? If changes, is change signaled clearly? Too many POVs? Is this the best POV?
8. **Show versus tell** - Sight, sound, smell, touch, taste; detailed description that allows interpretation, rather than telling directly
9. **Format of text** – Appropriate? Easy to read? Paragraphs too long? Lines too long?
10. **Grammar and spelling** – Grammatical errors? Punctuation? Misspelling and typos? Clichés? Melodrama?
11. **Style** – Humorous, wordy, sparse, literary, homespun, technical? Appropriate for the target reader? Is the tone appropriate for the story? Lack of variation in sentence length or structure? Excessive sentence fragments? Passive instead of active?

*Adapted from Victory Crayne and Amy Sterling Casil at:* [*http://www.crayne.com/howcrit.html*](http://www.crayne.com/howcrit.html)