



Criteria Used to Evaluate Fiction Manuscripts

Content & Organization

Exposition

- ❖ **Does the writer capture the reader's attention?**
- ❖ **Is the writer's theme or message clear to the reader?**
- ❖ **Does the writer describe a setting that creates an appropriate mood for the story?**

Rising Action & Climax

- ❖ **Does the story build in intensity as it progresses toward the climax?**
- ❖ **Is the writer's theme or message carried throughout the manuscript?**
- ❖ **Is the writer's theme or message developed/supported with vivid details?**

Falling Action & Resolution

- ❖ **Does the writer tie up the loose ends?**
- ❖ **Is there a clear resolution? (A clear resolution does not necessarily mean that the story ends happily.)**

Style

Use of creative language

- ❖ **Does the writer use creative language that adds meaning to the work? (This means that the language does not interfere with the writer's ability to communicate.)**
- ❖ **Does the writer use active rather than passive voice?**
- ❖ **Does the writer "show" details to the reader rather than "tell" them.**
- ❖ **Does the writer use strong action verbs as opposed to forms of the verb "to be"?**
- ❖ **Does the writer use strong action verbs rather than overuse adjectives and adverbs?**
- ❖ **Does the writer pay close attention to word choice (diction)? (Does the writer consider the connotative meaning of a word as opposed to only the denotative meaning?)**
- ❖ **Does the writer use fresh, new language rather than clichés and other trite expressions?**
- ❖ **Does the writer make his/her point clearly and concisely? (Does the writer avoid jargon and wordiness?)**

Does the style fit the content?

Does the point of view selected by the writer fit the content?

Syntax, Usage & Mechanics

Sentence structure

- ❖ **Is the sentence structure varied?**
- ❖ **Does the language flow? (Has the writer used appropriate transitions?)**
- ❖ **Has the writer avoided the following problems?***
 - **sentence fragments**
 - **run-on sentences**
 - **awkward or confusing sentences**

***Exception: These sentence problems may be acceptable when used in dialogue, if they are used sparingly and for a specific purpose.**

Has the writer avoided unnecessary shifts in tense?

Do subjects and verbs agree?

Is punctuation used correctly?