

## Questionnaire #4: Online Site

This questionnaire will help you evaluate an online critique site you may be considering. Check the boxes for your answers to the questions below, or fill in the blanks, if appropriate. Make a copy for each site you consider.

The questionnaire asks you to consider a lot of factors. It may seem overwhelming, and it may not be practical for you to complete it during your first encounter with a candidate site, much less during the initial experience if you decide to join one. For those reasons, you may want to read through the questions now or before you begin that exploration and decide which ones you need answers to most and which you can postpone answering or skip altogether.

**The name of this site is:**

### General Information About the Site

**Question 1:** When was the site founded?

- More than 10 years ago
- 5-10 years ago
- Less than 5 years ago
- I couldn't tell

**Question 2:** How many members does the site claim to have? (Note: this may not be meaningful information.)

- members
- No information provided or I couldn't tell

**Question 3:** How many members appear to be active on the site? (Note: this may be very difficult to impossible to determine, and even if you can, it may not be meaningful or useful.)

- members
- I couldn't tell

**Question 4:** Were the site's FAQs, terms of use, rules, or other guidance available before you signed up for the site?

- Yes
- No, I have to sign up to see them (skip to Question 8).



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**Question 5:** If you could see the site's FAQs, terms, etc., without signing up, were they easy to find?

Yes

No

**Question 6:** If you could find the FAQs, terms, etc., were they easy to understand?

Yes

Some yes, some no

No

There was too much information!

**Question 7:** Did the terms or rules say you were granting them unlimited and/or permanent permission to use your work however they wanted?

Yes!

I didn't see anything like this

No

**Question 8:** Does the site seem to be specifically for residents of a certain nation or region?

Yes

I couldn't tell

No

## How the Site Works

**Question 9:** Is critique the primary purpose of the site?

Yes (skip to Question 11)

No

**Question 10:** If no, what other things does the site focus on? Pick all that apply.

Discussions of other writing-related topics.

Drawing content for an affiliated magazine.

Networking with other writers, agents, or editors.

Other:

Promoting members' work.

Letting members post their work for others to read.

Promoting something the organizers or members are selling: books, courses, services, etc.

**Question 11:** How much of the site could you explore without joining?

- All of it
- A lot of it
- Some of it
- None of it (skip to Question 13)

**Question 12:** If you could explore the site:

A. Did it seem to be logically organized?

- Yes
- Not really
- No

B. Was it easy to get around in?

- Yes
- Not really
- No

**Question 13:** Is there a free trial period?

- Yes
- No (skip to Question 15)

**Question 14:** If yes, how long is it for?

- Unlimited, the site is completely free (skip to Question 21)
- Two weeks
- 30 days
- One month
- I couldn't tell
- Other:

**Question 15:** Are there other membership options that you could pay for?

- Yes
- No (skip to Question 21)
- I couldn't tell (skip to Question 21)

**Question 16:** If yes, how much does the first level cost?

- per month
- per quarter
- per year
- per other period:

**Question 17:** What “benefits” do you get at this level?

**Question 18:** If there is a second level, how much does it cost?

per month

per quarter

per year

per other period:

**Question 19:** What “benefits” do you get at this level?

**Question 20:** If there are any other membership levels, enter the same information here.

**Question 21:** Did the site have any rules or policies regarding bad behavior in critiques or in their forums, such as “trolling” (personal attacks on others)?

Yes, clear and specific

Yes, but generic

I didn’t find any (skip to Question 23)

**Question 22:** Could you tell if these rules or policies were consistently enforced?

Yes, they are

I couldn’t tell

No, they don’t appear to be

### Submitting Work to the Site

**Question 23:** Could you read any of the members’ submissions without joining the site?

Yes

No

**Question 24:** How do members submit their work for critique? Pick all that apply.

Send via e-mail

Post to a forum thread

Copy into an online form

Other:

**Question 25:** If the site uses posts to forum threads or online forms, are there any special format requirements for submissions?

Yes, they require special codes for boldfaced, italicized, underlined, etc., text. (This applies primarily to forum posts but may apply to other kinds of submissions too.)

Yes, forum threads or online forms can only accept work in:

Plain Text

Rich Text Format

The old Word format (.doc)

Other:

No special formats (skip to Question 27)

I couldn't find any information about this (skip to Question 27)

**Question 26:** Do you know how to format text this way?

Yes

I think so

No, but their instructions were clear

No

**Question 27:** Can you submit work to the site right after joining?

Yes

No, I must submit critiques first

Other:

No information provided

**Question 28:** Are there any minimum or maximum limits on how long a submission can be?

No

Yes, words minimum and/or words maximum

**Question 29:** Are there any limits on how often members can submit work? Pick all that apply.

No

Yes, no more than per day

Yes, no more than per week

Yes, they must write critiques

Yes, they must earn a certain number of points\* first by

Other:

\* "Points" is a generic term. Sites may use other words, like "credits," but the concept is the same.

**Question 30:** Can members submit chapters of a novel?

Yes, no restrictions

Yes, within the length limits

Yes, but special permission or coordination is required

No

**Question 31:** Are members required to submit a certain number of works within a given time period?

No (skip to Question 33)

Yes,                      submissions within                      weeks

Yes,                      submissions within a month

**Question 32:** If members don't meet this requirement, what happens? Pick all that apply.

It wasn't clear.

They can request temporary relief from the requirement.

They are put in probationary status until they meet it.

They can be kicked off the site if they don't catch up.

Other:

**Question 33:** Does the site specialize in certain genres and/or forms?

No

I couldn't tell

Yes:

**Question 34:** Are there any restrictions on the content of the submissions?

No

I couldn't tell

Yes, warnings are required for:

Yes, these things are absolutely prohibited:

**Question 35:** What are the target age ranges for submissions? Pick all that apply.

No, anything can be submitted.

Middle Grade (9-12)

Adults/all ages

Children (5-9)

New Adult (18-25)

Picture books (pre-reader/new reader)

Young Adult (13-19)

**Question 36:** How well do they match what you write?

Completely matches

Partially matches

Does not match at all

### How Critiques Are Done on the Site

**Question 37:** Did the site provide any guidance on what they expected from members' critiques?

Yes, there was very detailed guidance.

Yes, but it was pretty general.

Yes, but I didn't understand it.

No.

If there was any, I couldn't see it without signing up first.

**Question 38:** How do members provide their critiques?

On a separate online form

As a reply to the submission on the forum

In-line within the text

By e-mail

Other:

I couldn't tell (skip to Question 40)

**Question 39:** Do you know how to do this?

Yes

I think so

No, but their instructions were clear

No

**Question 40:** Can the author respond to the critiques?

Yes, in a reply to the post

Yes, via e-mail

Yes, by some other method:

No

I couldn't tell

**Question 41:** Did the site give any indication of how many critiques a member could expect to receive?

Yes, a minimum number of critiques was guaranteed.

No, but members were encouraged to keep their submissions short to attract more critiques.

No.

Other:

**Question 42:** Could you read any of the critiques of these submission without joining the site?

Yes

No (skip to Question 49)

**Question 43:** If you could read the critiques, on average, how many did submitters seem to get?

One or two at most

Many more than five

Fewer than five

It varied

More than five

I couldn't tell

**Question 44:** If you were able to review the critiques of members' work, what was your impression of them? Pick all that apply.

The critiques were:

Respectful but overwhelming.

Not respectful and overwhelming.

Respectful and helpful.

Not respectful but helpful.

Respectful but not helpful.

Not respectful and unhelpful.

**Question 45:** If the critiques were not helpful, why? Pick all that apply.

Too much information.

Attacked the author personally.

Too many contradictions between reviewers.

They were not relevant.

Criticized without providing suggestions on how to improve.

Other:

**Question 46:** What kinds of things did the members critique? Pick all that apply.

A. Fiction and non-fiction:

Beginnings and endings

Pacing

Showing versus telling

Structure and flow

Characterization

Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.)

Narrative voice and style

Other:

B. Fiction only:

Conflict and tension  
Stakes  
Story arc  
Plots and subplots  
Other:

Setting  
Dialogue  
Point of view

C. Non-fiction only:

Topic and main points  
Depth and completeness  
Viewpoint  
Other:

D. Poetry:

Clarity of images  
Structure and flow  
Form versus content  
Use of language  
Other:

**Question 47:** If the reviewers discussed these topics in the works, did the discussions seem helpful?

Yes

Some yes, some no

No

**Question 48:** Overall, how in-depth were the critiques?

Very

Moderately

It varied

Not very

**Question 49:** Were there any rules or restrictions on who could provide critiques?

No (skip to Question 53)

I didn't find any

Yes:

**Question 50:** Was there a minimum length requirement for critiques?

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ words

No, but critiques less than \_\_\_\_\_ words receive less credit/fewer points

No

**Question 51:** Are members required to provide a certain minimum number of critiques within a time period?

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ critiques per week

Yes, an average of \_\_\_\_\_ critiques per

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ critiques per month

month

Yes, an average of \_\_\_\_\_ critiques per week

No, but a certain pace was encouraged

No

**Question 52:** What happens if a member does not meet these requirements? Pick all that apply.

It's not clear.

They can request temporary relief from the requirement.

They are put in probationary status until they meet it.

They can be kicked off the site if they don't catch up.

Other:

## The Site's Members

**Question 53:** The site's members seem to be (pick all that apply):

Committed to helping each other get better.

Too focused on small issues.

Honest but tactful and constructive.

Highly critical of each other and their work.

Able to address large-scale issues (e.g. plot, characterization) as well as smaller ones (punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.).

Highly variable in their critiquing skills

Other:

**Question 54:** As best you can tell, what are the experience levels of the members?

All highly experienced.

All more experienced than me.

Some more experienced than me, some less.

All less experienced than me.

All very inexperienced.

**Question 55:** As best you could tell, what were the site members' goals? Pick all that apply.

Help each other improve

Get published or published again

Sign with a publisher or agent

Improve their craft

Other:

Improve their marketing and/or

publishing knowledge

I couldn't tell

## Overall Impression

**Question 56:** What was your impression of the site overall?

I want to join this site.

I need to explore it some more.

I need to think about it some more.

I need to compare it to other sites.

I will not join this site.