

Questionnaire #5: Forming Your Own Group

If you've decided none of the in-person, virtual, or hybrid groups or online sites you found suit you, you can always form your own group. Ask yourself these questions to help decide if you're ready to form such a group. Check all appropriate answers or fill in the blanks. If you have a number of candidate locations in mind, complete one copy of the questionnaire for each one.

You may find it very helpful to read through this questionnaire before you hold your organizational meeting. If you do, you'll have a better idea of what to discuss with potential members who show up. You might even consider giving it to each one—either at the meeting or ahead of time—and asking them to fill it out. That will give you a clearer idea of who prefers or needs to do what, what everyone's schedules are like, and so on.

Whys and Wherefores

Question 1: Why have you decided to form your own group? Pick all that apply.

There are no groups in my area.

There are no groups within a reasonable travel distance or time.

I didn't find any in-person groups I felt comfortable with.

None of the in-person groups I found critiqued, or were willing to critique, the kind of work I write.

The only groups I could find meet virtually, and I want to have a more personal experience.

I didn't find any social media-based groups I felt comfortable with.

I wasn't comfortable with any of the online sites I visited.

Other:

Question 2: What do you hope to gain by forming your own group? Pick all that apply.

I want to find other writers so I don't feel like I'm doing this all by myself.

I want to find other people who are similarly creative.

I want to learn from other writers, whether they have more experience than I do or just different perspectives.

I want to learn how to write better.

I want to learn how to write work that will be worthy of publication.

I want to share what I know about writing or other aspects of the writing business.

Other:



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Question 3: What are your top three goals for the group?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Question 4: If you already have friends or other writers who also want to form a group, what are their goals for it?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other:

Leadership

Question 5: Will the group have a formal leader?

Yes

I don't know yet (skip to [Question 7](#))

No (skip to [Question 7](#))

Question 6: If the group will, who will that be?

Me

Someone else:

I don't know yet

We haven't decided yet

Question 7: Who will make sure the group always has a meeting place?

Me

Someone else:

I don't know yet

We haven't decided yet

Question 8: Will the group have an agenda for each meeting?

Yes

I don't know yet (skip to [Question 10](#))

No (skip to [Question 10](#))

We haven't decided yet (skip to [Question 10](#))

Question 9: If yes, who will distribute it?

Me

Someone else:

I don't know yet

We haven't decided yet

Focus

Question 10: What types of work will the group specialize in, if any? Pick all that apply.

No specialization

Fiction

“Straight” or “functional” nonfiction (e.g. how-to guides, reports, journalistic piece, etc.)

Creative nonfiction (e.g. memoir, biography, history, personal essays, etc.)

Poetry

Scripts (for movies, television, stage plays, or video games)

Graphic novels, manga, anime

Other:

Question 11: What age range(s) of readers will the group specialize in, if any? Pick all that apply.

All ages

Middle Grade (8-12)

Adults

Children (5-7)

New Adult (18-25)

New Readers (3-5)

Young Adult (13-18)

Picture Books

Question 12: What genre(s) will the group specialize in, if any?

1.

2.

3.

Question 13: Are there any types of work, age ranges, or genres which the group will *not* review?

No, we'll review anything.

Yes:

Question 14: Besides the things you've identified above, what will make this group distinct from other critique groups in the area, if any?

Location

Question 15: How will the group meet?

In person only

Virtually only (skip to [Question 37](#))

Both in person and virtually

Question 16: Name this potential meeting location:

Question 17: Can this location be reserved in advance?

Yes

No (skip to [Question 19](#))

Not applicable (if you'll meet at members' homes, for example)

Question 18: How far in advance can you reserve the space?

Only the same day

At least one day in advance

Up to _____ days in advance

Up to _____ weeks in advance

Up to _____ months in advance

Other:

Question 19: How long you can reserve the space for?

No more than one hour

Up to two hours

Up to three hours

As long as we want it

Other:

Question 20: Is there a cost for reserving the space?

No

Yes: _____ per meeting

Yes: _____ per month

Other:

Question 21: Is the space accessible for people with disabilities?

Yes

No

Question 22: Does the space have good lighting?

Yes

There might be some problems

No

Question 23: Does the space have good acoustics? That is, will group members be able to hear each other easily, or might there be too much background noise?

Yes

There might be some problems

No

Question 24: Does the location have sufficient table space?

Yes

There might be some problems

No

Question 25: How many people can fit comfortably in the room?

Number:

It will vary

Question 26: Will it be free from interruptions?

Yes

Sometimes

Probably not

No

Question 27: Is their Wi-Fi secure?

Yes

I don't know

No

We'll use our own

Schedule

Question 28: What will our schedule be?

Meet once a week

Meet every two weeks

Meet twice a month

Meet once a month

Other:

Question 29: What day will we meet on?

Question 30: If we will meet on a repeating schedule, on what days (e.g. first and third Tuesdays) will we meet?

Question 31: When will meetings start?

Question 32: When will meetings end?

Technology

Question 33: Not including Wi-Fi capabilities, what audio/visual services or support are available? Pick all that apply.

Video projector

Sound system

Video screen

None (Skip to [Question 35](#))

Question 34: If any or all of these are available, will you have to pay for them?

Video projector: Free Pay

Sound system: Free Pay

Video screen: Free Pay

Question 35: Which of these systems can you or group members provide? Pick all that apply.

Video projector

Sound system

Video screen

I don't know

None of them

Question 36: Will we have the option for members to meet virtually?

Yes

I don't know

No

Question 37: If the group will meet only virtually, or both virtually and in person, what app (e.g. Zoom) will we use?

App name:

We haven't decided yet

I don't know

Question 38: If the chosen app requires a paid account to avoid time limits, who will pay for it?

- I already have one
- Another member already has one
- Someone will have to buy one
- We haven't decided yet
- Not applicable (Skip to [Question 40](#))

Question 39: Do I, or does another member of the group, have an account for this app so we can meet as long as we need to?

- Yes
- I don't know
- No
- The app we've chosen doesn't require one

Membership

Question 40: What are your preferred minimum and maximum sizes for the group?

- I don't know
- We don't have any
- Minimum:
- Maximum:

Question 41: How will the group find new members? Pick all that apply.

- We'll recruit our writer friends
- We'll contact other groups
- We'll contact local college or university creative writing programs or language departments
- We'll contact local libraries
- We'll contact local bookstores
- We'll post notices on social media
- We'll post notices at:

- We'll spread the word at writers' conferences
- Other:

Question 42: Are there any special kinds of background, experience, or skill you'd like to have at least one member bring to the group? Pick all that apply.

No

Prior critique group experience

Knowledge about how to critique effectively

Experience with critiquing certain types of work:

Publication with a major (or "traditional" or "Big 5") publishing house

Experience with literary agents

Publication with a small press

Self-publishing experience

Experience with professional editors (freelance or publishing house)

Experience with artists (for book covers, picture books, or graphic novels)

Other:

Question 43: Are there any special limitations you want to place on group membership, such as religious or political affiliation, viewpoint, etc.?

No

Yes:

Question 44: Who will deal with any member who's causing problems or not contributing?

Me

Someone else:

The rest of the group

I don't know yet

We haven't decided yet

Question 45: Who will deal with any cliques that might form within the group?

Me

Someone else:

The rest of the group

I don't know yet

We haven't decided yet

You

Question 46: How comfortable are you with dealing with changes (in schedule, meeting location, membership, etc.)?

Very comfortable

I can manage it

I can manage it but I don't like it

I hate change!

Question 47: And the most important question of all: Are you really ready to take this on?

Yes, I've done it before.

I think so.

I hope so!

I'll need help.

I have friends who've volunteered to help.

Honestly? No.