



BUDDY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Your buddy group members are the best source of support, encouragement, feedback, and connection you'll enjoy throughout your Life Writers session. In particular, each month you and your buddies will review each other's stories and provide specific feedback.

Buddy groups are largely unstructured by design so each group can do what works best for them. However, we'll not leave you uninspired.

The following are some practices that worked well for previous groups.

Getting Started - Your First Buddy Group Meeting:

- Introduce yourself, what you're writing, why you joined Life Writers.
- Share what you need or want out of the buddy group experience (e.g., critique on stories, accountability to write regularly, etc.).
 - Clearly communicate the type of feedback you prefer (e.g., stronger feedback or critique on stories).
- Agree on ways to connect or support one another throughout each week.
 - For example:
 - Schedule weekly buddy group Zoom meeting to connect, check in, give story feedback, or offer encouragement
 - Participate in virtual write-ins together
 - Make phone calls or check-in via email
 - If in the same town, meet for coffee and write together
- Decide how you plan to share your monthly stories with one another for the Fourth Tuesday Feedback Group. Will you:
 - Email attachments directly to one another?
 - Post stories on the monthly Share Stories page on the Life Writers site and download from there?
- Allow yourself plenty of time to adequately review your buddies' stories.
- Agree to email the completed Story Review Form back to your buddy with your notes immediately after the Fourth Tuesday Feedback Group.



BUDDY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Going Forward:

- Check-in or connect in some way as a group each week.
- Share your story with your group at least a week prior to the Fourth Tuesday Feedback Group.
- Commit to reviewing each buddy's story prior to the Fourth Tuesday Feedback Group and complete the Story Review Form. Give yourself plenty of time to provide helpful feedback.
- Plan to attend the Fourth Tuesday Feedback Group to discuss each member's story in depth during a buddy group break-out session. If you can't attend, let your buddies know ahead of time.
- After the Feedback Group, email to your buddies your notes and completed Story Review Form.



HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Life Writers Feedback Group takes place on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Preparation for the monthly Feedback Group:

- Prepare a story of your choosing to share with your buddy group for feedback on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Story must be a **maximum of two (2) double-spaced pages** of **twelve-point font** such as Cambria or Times New Roman.
- Email your story to buddy group members or upload the story on that month's Share Stories page as a **Word or PDF document** (do not paste text into the comments box). **Share stories by the third Tuesday of the month** in advance of the Feedback Group.
- Review the stories your buddies have submitted and prepare your feedback prior to the Feedback Group.
- **Use the Story Review form** provided on the Share Stories page (<https://lifewriters.us/share-stories/>), to organize your thoughts and questions
- Participate in the feedback group session. Each person will have fifteen minutes to receive feedback on his/her story.
- Return the completed Story Review Form and any edits to your buddy via email after the Feedback Group.



HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Discussion Format:

1. The author reads a sentence or two of his/her work and then listens to the discussion.
2. The group summarizes the story the author is telling.
3. They discuss what was good about the piece, what worked for them.
4. They discuss ways the story can be improved, giving specific suggestions.
5. The author is then able to ask the group questions, request more clarification, etc.

Author's Job in Discussing His/Her Work:

1. Listen.
2. Don't explain or defend.
3. Take notes on your copy while the discussion is going on.
4. Take parts of the discussion that are useful and leave the rest.

Reader's Job in Discussing Class Members' Work:

1. Write comments on the pages, what you liked, what you didn't understand, etc.
2. Be specific in your comments, what exactly you liked, what specifically the author can do to improve the piece.
3. Follow the feedback sheet in each discussion.
4. Remember to give useful and constructive feedback. Give comments in the spirit you wish to receive comments from others.
5. Know that you can learn more about writing by editing other people's work than you can imagine.



FEEDBACK FORM

Title: _____

Author: _____

Comments by: _____

1. What is the story about?

2. What did the author do well?

3. What could the author do to improve the piece?

4. Additional questions or comments for the author: