

FICTION CRITIQUE GUIDE

PART 1 • STRUCTURE

A strong "skeleton" is the key to a well-built story or novel.

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| 1. TITLE | The title supports the theme of the story. |
| 2. HOOK | The first sentence entices you to read more. |
| 3. CHARACTER | The main character is introduced on the first page. |
| 4. PROBLEM | The problem to be solved is identified on the first page. |
| 5. BALANCE | Dialogue without description and action becomes a play.
Description without dialogue and action becomes a sermon. |
| 6. PACE | There are no "speed bumps" from text that goes nowhere. |
| 7. TENSION | The suspense is created by foreshadowing, not by surprise appearances or disappearances. Chapters end with a cliffhanger. |
| 8. MOTIVATION | Justification for the characters' motives becomes clear early, not tacked on at the end as an explanation for their behavior. |
| 9. WINDUP | The highest intensity comes in the final pages or chapter, followed by tying up loose ends and relating the end to the beginning. |

◇ Each editorial concern is balanced by a compliment. ◇

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