

## STARTING A WRITING GROUP

Writing is solitary. A writer sits at the computer or under a tree, alone with their thoughts. When the inspiration comes or just the hard work of forcing those words onto paper appears, the creator can feel like a colossus of literature. The belief that they have written the perfect piece is a high.

Then comes the crash. Writers can move between egoism and despair over their work. It is a strange business. The balance in writing can be achieved through the editorial process. How? The establishment of a writing group can become the support and reality check that a writer needs.

How to set up a Writers' Group when time and distance act as obstacles?

1. Find 4 people with writing interests through associations such as the Society of Women Writers, the FAW, the Writers Centre.
2. Do not extend the numbers of the group in general, as too many participants can make it a burden.
3. Make sure that the group has the same aspirations as you do. So if someone wants to join to group to receive confirmation of their talents without the criticism, that writer could be destructive to the group.
4. Swap email addresses. That is the easiest way to send material and receive editorial comments.
5. Now the business of the writers' group. Set out the rules. This is a guideline only:-

How many words of writing are to be sent? There needs to be a limit, as some people send so much it becomes a burden on the group.

How often is the writing to be sent?

When is the writing to arrive?

What is the time frame for an editorial response?

Some groups follow this up with actual meetings once a month or once a quarter or on an ad-hoc basis. This needs to be agreed on.

There has to be an agreement on HONESTY. Editorial comments like 'that is wonderful' are fine for parts of the writing. However the most help is achieved when issues are brought up which are not so wonderful. The writer often does not have perspective. The critique can give insight. It is up to the writer of course, to accept or reject the comments.

WARNING. When a writer just defends their writing and argues that the critic just does not understand, in the end the writer will 'win'. That is, the critic will stop commenting and say - 'yes it is great.' That is fine if

-----

Susanne Gervay

[www.sgervay.com](http://www.sgervay.com)

[www.sgervay.com/blog](http://www.sgervay.com/blog)