FICTION

Critical Comments

Students may misunderstand some comments about content or form, so try asking questions about a troubling area, using the comments as a jumping off point.

Content: What the author writes on the page

- Character
  - What does this character want?
  - Why do you introduce this character here?

- Plot
  - How could you get from point A to B?
  - Could you expand this plot point?

- Dialogue
  - Is there a more natural way to say this?
  - How would you say this in your own words?

- Imagery
  - Could you describe this better?
  - Is this image necessary for the narrative?

Form: How the author writes a particular stanza

- Syntax or diction
  - Why did you write this sentence as you did?
  - What are you trying to say here?
  - Is there a different word you could use there?

- Layout and white space
  - Why did you add this white space?
  - Why did you break the scene off here?

- Punctuation
  - Why did you use a comma instead of a period?

- Structure
  - Is there a better place to include this scene?
FICTION

Personal Comments

These comments may hint towards helpfulness but stop before they get there. The best way to go about these comments is to rephrase them into something more constructive that addresses a content or form issue.

“Boring.”

- **Rephrase:** “This scene fell a little flat for me.”
- **Question:** How can you keep the reader in this moment?

“I don’t like this part.”

- **Rephrase:** “This scene isn’t working because...”
- **Question:** How can we make this scene more...?

Hearts, stars, or check marks

- Hearts may be nice to see, but does the author have any idea what this means?
- Is this mark used elsewhere in the story that hints towards a meaning?