Shrimp Shop

The Writers in Pittsburgh Workshop

The Shrimp Shop is the writing workshop hosted and organized by **Writers in Pittsburgh**. This short document will cover the rules, format, and guidelines of the workshop. This guide will also cover accessing Shrimp Shop materials.

The Shrimp Shop is organized completely on volunteer labor, and the items outlined in this document may be changed at leadership's discretion. Please reach out to info@theshrimp.shop with any questions or concerns about this document or the Shrimp Shop in general.

Sign up here for the Shrimp Shop!

Join our Discord

This is an 18+ workshop.

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Privacy Notice

All documents shared from and within the Shrimp Shop will be kept as private as reasonably possible. Works will be distributed through our Google Group email list, our private discord channel, and our website. Access to pieces on any of these platforms requires manual approval from our leadership. Works will be deleted from all locations once their workshop has concluded.

Under no circumstances are our members permitted to redistribute writing outside of our group without the express permission of the original author.

Do not use AI in the crafting of your critiques.

Do not use AI when writing your pieces.

Anyone sharing another Shrimp Shop author's work outside of this group without their permission will be removed immediately.

Rules

These rules are subject to change at any time and exist to be enforced as needed.

1. **Be kind**. This is the single most important rule of the workshop. We are here to celebrate the love we all share love for writing, not to tear one another down. Don't name-call, don't talk over people, don't storm off in a huff. We are critiquing stories, not people.
2. **Be respectful.** All of us come from different backgrounds and different skill levels. Sometimes we'll have wildly varying thoughts and opinions on pieces we're critiquing—and that's great! Argue your point with your whole chest, but don't let the heat get to you. We're all here because we're passionate about stories.
3. **Be tolerant. Absolutely no racism, bigotry, homophobia, or intolerance of any sort is permitted.** You're going to read stories in this workshop written by and written about queer people and minorities. If that gives you any pause, don't bother showing up. We will literally pounce on you and kill you like at the end of "The Lottery."
4. **No AI.** This workshop operates under a strict anti-A.I. policy. We are all here to read and critique words created by other human beings using their own hearts and minds. Do not submit A.I. generated text or images. Do not use A.I. to edit. It has no place here.
5. **Don't do crime at the workshop.** Get it out of your system before or after, not during.
6. **No gratuitous scenes of violence, sexual assault, or gore.** These things all have their place in fiction, and we're not prudes, but please avoid contextless violence meant only to shock. Just use your best judgment. Feel free to use trigger warnings at your own discretion.
7. **If you have an issue with a workshop piece or believe it has violated any of the above rules, reach out to info@theshrimp.shop and let us know.** Please do not directly solicit the writer.

Location and Format

The current Shrimp Shop location is Balance Brewing Company (2257 Babcock Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237)**.** Shrimp Shops take place every Wednesday at 6:30 PM.

- Make sure you're signed up for the Shrimp Shop and are a member of our discord in order to stay up to date with times and locations.
- During a workshop, the author of the piece being workshopped is expected to *participate minimally* while taking notes.
- A workshop generally flows through three stages:
    - **Initial thoughts and feelings:** We'll go around the table, one at a time, and say a few things we liked about the piece, a few things we didn't, and any final thoughts or vibes. If someone says something you want to come back to, make a note for the next stage.
    - **Open response:** After the initial go around, the table will be opened for free-form discussion on the piece.
    - **The final word:** Once the open discussion starts to peter out (or we begin to run out of time), the author of the piece will be brought into the discussion to ask any questions or for any final clarifications.
- Slots are on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to members who've attended previous workshops and have not recently submitted.
- **Please attend at least one Shrimp Shop before requesting a slot to be workshopped.**
- Reach out to submissions@theshrimp.shop to set up a date to be workshopped.
- Workshop pieces should be submitted to the group **at least 5 days in advance of the workshop in either doc, docx, odf, or rtf format in order to give the group enough time to read each piece.**
- The workshop will not meet in November in order to accommodate Novel November**.**

Guidelines

These are some useful guidelines for the Shrimp Shop and workshopping in general. Check out this article!

Submitting

- We are currently enforcing a 30 page (7,500 words double-spaced) soft cap on all submissions. A little over is fine, just use your best judgement. Want to submit a couple flash pieces? Awesome! But please don't submit thirty individual single page poems. This limit ensures that everyone has time to read and form meaningful critiques before a meetup.
    - If you're submitting an excerpt from a longer piece, make sure it makes sense as a standalone piece in order to get the most out of your workshop.
    - We do plan to eventually allow the submission of novels, seeing as this group started as a novel writing group in the first place. Novels will need to be submitted at least a month in advance.
- To maximize the benefits of a workshop, **submit a piece that is polished and completed to the best of your individual ability.** Nobody's expecting perfection, but you'll get more useful feedback on a piece you've read through a few times and revised yourself before submitting for others to read.
- Your pieces may be formatted however you like, but if you're not married to your particular format, the Shrimp Shop recommends using **standard manuscript format** to ensure ease and readability.
- No matter how you choose to format your story**, a header with your piece's title and page numbers on each page is always tremendously helpful. Adding page numbers to a header or footer in Word.**
- **Pieces should be submitted at least 5 days before the workshop** in either **doc, docx, odf, or rtf format**. Reach out to submissions@theshrimp.shop if you need help getting your piece in the right file format.
- **When being critiqued, we encourage writers to remain quiet and take notes.** It's generally more useful to listen than it is to speak unless you have a very specific question or goal in mind for your work that you'd like to clarify at the beginning of your workshop.

    - It's tempting to jump in and explain your work when it feels like people aren't getting it. After years and years of experience, we can assure you beyond any doubt that this is almost never beneficial to you in the long run.
    - If everyone's misinterpreting a part of your story, make note of why that seems to be happening and how you can fix it in your next draft.
    - It is, however, useful to ask a clarifying question if you're unsure of what a critique meant by something they said. It's also okay to ask the group to move onto the next point if they're hung up on a detail for too long.
- Sometimes you'll get a critique that you just don't like or that you flat out disagree with. Not everything needs to be for everyone. Make note of what might be useful and shrug the rest off. We're all here to grow.
- Resubmitting a piece after a significant rewrite or edit is okay, but doing so back-to-back may lower the quality of feedback you receive. We can only read a piece for the first time once.

Critiquing

- This group contains many writers writing across many different genres. **It is incredibly beneficial to read and write outside of your genre.** Not everything is for everyone, and that's good! Critiques for and from readers outside of your genre lend a unique perspective and are often-times invaluable.
- When giving a critique, start with *what you liked about the piece.* This is more than just a friendly gesture—it lets a writer know what they're doing right.
    - Avoid harsh language or personal attacks when offering a critique. Always give a writer the benefit of the doubt.
- Offer critiques in line with the piece. If we're reading historical fiction, it is not useful to a writer to suggest changing the piece to a hard sci-fi space opera. If the writer's vision is unclear to you, then that's a notable critique in and of itself.
- The point of a critique is to help make a piece the best possible version of itself.
- Printing out a story can be more useful than reading it on a screen, allowing you to mark it up and write down notes about things you want to bring up during the workshop.

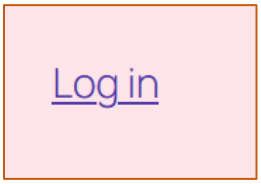
How to Access Workshop Material

Make sure you're signed up here for the workshop. Afterward, workshop material may be accessed through any of the methods below.

From the Shrimp Shop Website

Workshop materials and information on upcoming workshops can be accessed from https://theshrimp.shop.

1. Click "Log in" from the bottom left-hand corner of the site.



2. Enter your account credentials. These will have been emailed to you after your signup has been processed. **If you cannot find your credentials, check your spam folder.**

3. Click the "Current Shrimp Shop" link from the top navigation.

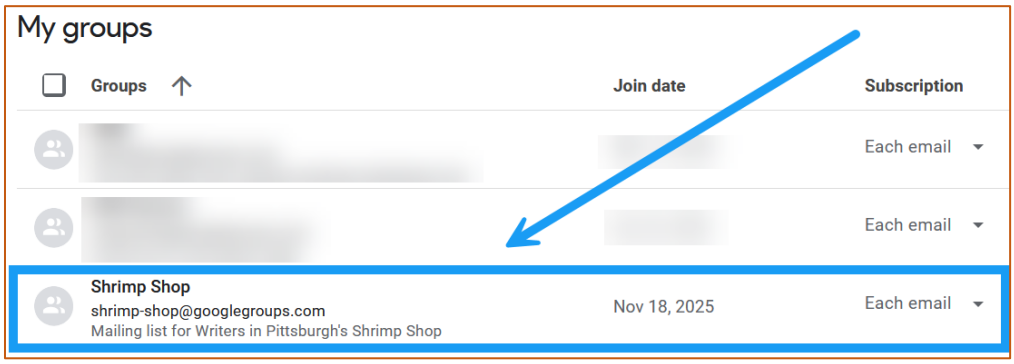
4. You should now have access to the current Shrimp Shop piece if one is available. Note that "Upcoming" will bring you to the current Shrimp Shop schedule.

From the Google Group (Email)

All workshop pieces will automatically be emailed to you once submitted.

If you've joined the workshop after a piece has been submitted and would still like to access the piece from the Google Group, perform the following steps:

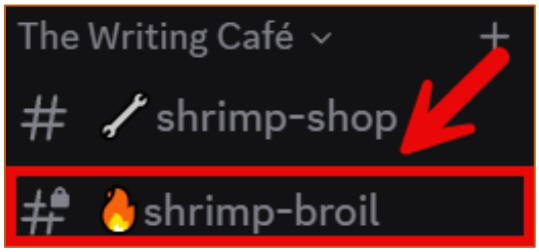
1. Log into http://groups.google.com with your Google account.
2. Click the "Shrimp Shop" group.



3. The current workshop item will be at the top of the list.

From Discord

After signing up here and providing your discord username, Shrimp Shop workshop pieces will appear pinned at the top of a hidden channel in the Writers in Pittsburgh Discord. The channel, which is shown below, is only visible to users who've signed up and been approved for the Shrimp Shop.



Conclusion

If you have any comments, questions, or issues not covered in this guide, please reach out to info@theshrimp.shop. We look forward to workshopping with you!