Workshopping Fiction Karen Hofmann

1. Group leaders have two tasks:
2. Keep track of time and individual time allotments
3. Keep group on focus
4. Author will read piece aloud while group follows along in their copies, making notes. The reading aloud is an integral part of the process. Two to three pages is enough to read at one time. The group will have read the entire piece beforehand, as well.
5. The session will always begin with a summary, given by another student, of the story’s plot, type, and theme.
6. Author may not defend or explain what he/she has written, unless asked for clarification on a specific point.
7. Make sure everyone has an equal chance to contribute. Rotate, so that the same people don’t always speak first or last.
8. The following are useful responses to a text:
9. Comments on effectiveness and clarity of **setting** detail
10. Comments on effectiveness, complexity, and clarity of **characterization**,
11. Identification of **story structure, proportion, length**
12. Comments on **story tension and climax placement, and clarity**
13. Comments on effectiveness of point of view chosen, consistency
14. Comments on clarity and effectiveness of **diction and style**
15. These are **NOT** useful responses:
16. Comments on subject matter: “Not another story about a three-headed dog!”
17. General evaluations: “I liked it.”
18. Personal inferences, in first-person writing: “You really slept with that many people?”
19. Verbal notes of spelling/grammar errors (except general ones like “The many shifts in verb tense were confusing.”)
20. “You should do…” kinds of comments – except when solicited by author.