

Book Reviews Guide

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March, 2024

Agenda:

- Reader Case Study
- Quick Tips
- Value
- Review Types
- Gold Standard
- Paid Reviews
- Reference Table
- How to Request
- Final Notes



Meet James, a Reader

What is James asking himself as he's considering buying the book in his hands?

- "Is it one of the genres I usually read?"
- "What's the book about?"
- "How is it going to make me feel?"
- "Is it any good?"



Book Promotion Collateral

Your book promotion collateral can answer some of these questions:

Readers' Pre-purchase Questions	Promotion Collateral
Is it the right genre for me?	Market your book by targeting readers who you know like your specific genre, and make your genre visible and obvious on your cover and on your marketing materials
What's the book about?	Back cover synopsis/description, and other synopsis blurbs on your website or social media. It's useful to create 4-5 versions of your synopsis (varying in length)
How will this book make me feel?	A book trailer or short promo video, using theme music, text, and video clips, can set the vibe and atmosphere of your story
How do I know this book is any good?	Editorial reviews and blurbs from readers or other authors in your genre attest to the book's quality and readability

Quick Tips About Reviews

- Reviews are an incredibly powerful influencer for potential book buyers – and there are more options than ever
- There's no such thing as too early for a review - even if your book release is 6 months from now, many review houses will accept a submission, and the earlier the better
- Most review houses now accept PDF manuscript submissions, which is a huge time (and resource) saver
- Reviews are well worth the investment for your current book and they have a long shelf life for your writing career
- Send your book to a variety of different types of reviewers for full coverage
- Approach prominent news outlets, newspapers from where you currently live, your hometown, and university alumni organizations



Value

Reviews are one of the most important marketing tools for your forthcoming published book. Why?

People are busy and time is a precious commodity. If you help them decide whether or not to buy your book, that's less work and research they need to do. And when you save people TIME, they will love you for it.

Reviews demonstrate that other people think your writing is high quality and your book is readable and, therefore, worthy of not only the cost of buying it but also their time investment to actually read it.



Definitions

Free review houses means there is no fee to submit your book for a review (and also no guarantee that your book will be selected for a review).

Paid review houses guarantee that your book will be reviewed *for a fee*, though there is no guarantee that the resulting review will be a favorable. Luckily, if it's an unfavorable review, most places will typically agree to withhold the review from publishing on their website.

NOTE: Even an unfavorable review could still have some useful pull-quotes that you can use to market your book.



Review Types

For potential readers, seeing reviews of your book is great. Their next question will be about who's writing the review and why they're necessarily an authority worth listening to.

- Industry Editorial Reviews – Publisher's Weekly, Booklist, Library Journal, Kirkus – why are these important? They're free, they're impartial, and they're the industry gold standard in credibility
- Author Blurbs – for back cover – preferably by authors who write in your genre or prominent media influencers
- Magazines/Newspapers – NYT Book Review, SF Chronicle, LA Times, Boston Globe, etc.
- Other Reputable Editorial Review Houses – The US Review of Books, San Francisco Book Review, Midwest Book Review,
- Blogger Reviews – These are great because they often come with an author interview for extra PR value
- YouTube Book Reviewers – Video is a dynamic and powerful medium for both entertainment and learning. [50 Book Review YouTube Channels To Follow](#)
- Reader Reviews – Reader reviews are powerful metrics of your book's readability because they're deemed to be the most impartial. And you don't necessarily need to wait till your book comes out. Ask friends/family/street team to read a few chapters and provide a one-sentence statement about something they liked about it and publish these on your website pre-release as *What readers are saying so far*. "A wild ride, begs for a sequel" or "Once you pick this book up, good luck trying to put it down"

Industry Gold Standard - FREE



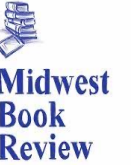
PROs

- Most major review houses now accept PDF galleys instead of hard copy, which is more convenient. This also means you can potentially get reviews very early in the process. Positive reviews from recognized editorial reviewers like these matter to bookstores and libraries that are considering buying your books and promoting you.
- Many of those venues also have a separate division or some sort of process now that specifically favors small press authors or self-published authors
- A review from one of these outlets can be very differentiating in this competitive publishing landscape

CONs

- VERY selective – most only select a small percentage of books submitted and it depends on your publisher
- Typically don't review POD books – only offset print runs
- Lead time requirements are typically 4 months prior to official release date
- Many require publishers to submit books for authors, not direct submittals
- Most require bound hard copies, and often multiple copies
- Reviews are not guaranteed, and published reviews aren't guaranteed to necessarily be positive
- If you're selected for a review, reviews can take as long as 3 months to get back

Paid Editorial Reviews



PROs

- Reviews are guaranteed with lots of options (length of review, turnaround times)
- Automatic coverage and visibility by getting published on their website and in their newsletters
- They offer expedited options for getting your review back sooner (for additional cost)
- Some of them offer multiple options like premium and premium-plus for additional services to get the most out of your review with broader visibility
- They also offer to not publish your review on their website if the review is not favorable

CONs

- Can be expensive

Paid Editorial Reviews

Reviewer	Pros	Cons
Publisher's Weekly	Industry gold standard, free for traditionally published. Must submit via Galley Tracker, see link	No option specifically for indie published (see next slide), no acknowledgement of receipt, low chance of being selected for review, could take a while
Library Journal Booklist	Industry gold standard, free	Not likely to accept small/indie/self published books using POD model
Kirkus	Industry gold standard, expedited options, offers free and paid	No acknowledgement of receipt, low chance of being selected for a review, could take a while
Midwest Book Review	Free for hardcopy books, expedited options, lengthy reviews and extremely well written and highly detailed, and they are FAST. \$50 for ebook submittals	For free option, very selective. For paid option, very expensive (but they have \$50/off deals twice a year)
San Francisco Book Review	Expedited options, very well written	None, recommended
US Review of Books Foreword Reviews	Expedited options, well written	Fee based
LA Review of Books	Highly respected, has eBook/PDF option to submit, also offers a Clarion Review for wider coverage	Fee based
The Prairies Book Review	Credible industry book reviewing resource, no fee	Expensive, long wait time, hard requirement for submitting books 4 months prior to release
The Book Commentary	A literary magazine and book review house – well respected, well written reviews, not that expensive, lots of pricing and expediting options	Hardcopies only, no acknowledgement of receipt, no guarantee of a review
Book Viral Reviews	Well written reviews, several pricing/expediting options, fast turnaround times	None, recommended
Reader Views	Well written reviews, beautiful graphics, great publicity, worth it	None
Literary Titan	Well written reviews, offers standard (free but not guaranteed) and a paid (guaranteed) option, lots of social media promotion	Very selective, need to submit your book before they “decide” to review you (even though it’s also paid)! Very snobby and exclusive
	Well written reviews, lowest cost, fast turnaround time, includes an author interview	None, recommended

For Self Published Books

Reviewer	Pros	Cons
<u>Booklife by Publishers Weekly</u>	Specifically for self-published authors, and reviews are guaranteed; Indie authors can occasionally be reviewed by Traditionally-published option	Expensive, long wait time, even for expedited reviews
<u>Blue Ink Reviews</u>	Specifically for self-published authors, offers expedited option	Expensive, long wait time, even for expedited reviews
<u>Clarion Reviews</u> (indie arm of Forward Reviews)	Good visibility and market coverage, other perks	Expensive, and hard requirement for receiving books for review 4 months prior to publication

How To Request a Review Via Email

Subject: Crime Thriller Book Review Request: XX by (your name)

Hello _____,

- Thank you so much for considering XX, a YA coming of age thriller, for a possible book review by the LA Times. A PDF digital galley is attached.
- 1-paragraph synopsis
- The themes of this book mirror some contemporary challenges among young adults, including X and X. Comparative titles include X and X.
- Book details: Publisher, distributor, ISBNs, release date, formats, pages, genre/subgenre, audience
- 1-2 editorial review quotes here
- Author website URL, Amazon link if your book is up for pre-order, Amazon author page (if you have one)
- VERY short author bio and/or previous titles

Please let me know if I can answer any questions and thank you again for your consideration.

Note: I don't recommend sending your Press Release or Author Media Kit unless it's specifically asked for.

HAPPILY INVEST IN YOURSELF AND YOUR WRITING CAREER

Do this by investing in 1-2 Paid Reviews and do it early in the process, which will give you a lot of time to capitalize on that review – it can help raise your book’s visibility, you can use blurbs from your review on social media, use it to influence booksellers to carry your book and set up signing events for you down the road. Also submit your book for the free, gold-standard reviews and do it early to give yourself the best chance of acceptance. Reach out to me for any follow-up questions and, in particular, if anything in this guide needs to be updated based on your experience.



Go Forth and Promote