



Dear Reader Exercise

In a letter written to a prospective new reader, answer the following questions.

1. Who are you?
2. What is this book about?
3. What inspired you to write it?
4. Why do you love this story?
5. What do you hope the reader will enjoy most about it?
6. What promise are you going to make the reader?

Write as if you are speaking directly to that reader, using the first and second person (“you” and “I”).

The completed letter should only be 2-3 pages long, but it will help you get clear on the outcome you want for your reader.

Keep in mind, this is not a questionnaire. This is a letter that you’re writing to a prospective reader. In it, you want to create a connection that demonstrates that you know who they are and what they’re looking for, as well as why your book is the next one they should read.

This letter will become a beacon that guides your writing, and should resonate with the belief that buying and reading your book is the best thing a reader can do for themselves. If you don’t believe it, then why should they?

If your book isn’t living up to the promises of this letter, the gaps and inconsistencies will become readily apparent. It will also help you determine what fits within the scope



of the book and what is extraneous material that, while good, is unnecessary and clutters your writing.

Many authors tell us that they never really knew when their book was done. They could have kept writing and weren't clear as to whether they'd written too much or not enough. Is this plotline really needed? This exercise sets boundaries for the book and makes it clear when it's complete.

Letter Structure

Consider breaking the letter into these basic sections:

Concept

Discuss the basic concepts of the story. It should lay out a roadmap for the journey and tell your readers what to expect as they pick up the book and begin their journey with you. Provide a basic overview of its theme and highlight what they'll get out of reading it. This will consist of a few very well-crafted sentences that summarize the essential themes of the book.

Expert

Highlight exactly why you are the one to write this book. Share the things about your education, background, specialized training and experience that make you stand out above the rest. Credentials aren't nearly as important as passion and experience. So let those shine through. By the time you're done, the reader should have no doubt that you're an author they want to read.

Unique Selling Point (USP)

Share how this book is different from any other on the market. What makes it unique? Why should readers choose your book over others available to them? Demonstrate its appeal and why your book is more entertaining and thought-provoking than any other book out there.

The Promise

Make your readers a promise about what they can expect to receive, learn or experience if they invest their time in reading your particular book. If they give you their time and money, they must know what they're going to get in exchange. Of course, the best promises are those you can keep. So don't over-promise, but make sure that what they'll get out of reading your book is worth the investment of their time and money. They need to know that when you keep your promise to them, they will be getting what they want out of the exchange.

