

Quick Tips on Requesting Feedback

There are many different kinds of feedback you are going to need throughout the editing process of your book. Be specific as to what kind of feedback you are seeking from each reader. Are you in need of some fact-checking for a historical novel? Do you need someone to just check for spelling and grammatical errors? Do you want to know exactly which passages or sentences made the reader laugh or cry? Are you looking for constructive feedback on your photographs or illustrations? Do you need someone to go through worksheets or exercises you've created?

Be explicit.

...including about what you are *not* needing from each reader: "The book is my memoir, so I understand you might read something and disagree with certain details - maybe you think I was wearing a red dress in a story, but I've written that my dress was pink - but I ask that you refrain from trying to "correct" such details from your memory of any experience I've written about."

Give your reader a deadline, then once the book is in their hands, try to avoid asking them how they're doing. With a deadline, they know when you need it by, which means you avoid the unnecessary pressure of wondering whether or not your book is actually being read.

...but be sure to confirm with your reader that he or she is willing and able to meet your deadline. The two of you might need to compromise on a different deadline.

Give detailed instructions as to how you would like to receive their feedback:

"Put an "x" next to any sentence that makes you laugh out loud."

"Make any corrections with an orange pen."

"Write any questions you have about any details in the story on the back of each page."

"Copy each file and create a new one with "ver2" added to the file name."

If you are mailing a hard copy of your manuscript, include a pre-paid shipping label so your reader can return it to you as conveniently as possible: "A pre-paid UPS label is included, so all you need to do is drop off the package at your local UPS store. You can re-use the same box/envelope."

If you are asking them to review digital files, use a file-sharing service such as Dropbox or Google Docs so no one has to keep track of sending files back and forth over email.