

# Beta Reader Job Description

## What is My Job as a Beta Reader?

As a beta reader, you will identify what type and tone of story the author is going for and shape your feedback to help the author realize their vision for the story.

You are the author's extra set of eyes. You will highlight areas that need improvement and give (gently) honest feedback to weed out story issues before the manuscript goes to an editor.

## What Issues Does a Beta Reader Look For?

As a beta reader, your focus will be on development. This includes plot, characters, and over all story cohesiveness.

- ✓ Look for issues like:
  - Plot holes
  - Vague descriptions
  - Weak characters
  - Clichés
  - Confusing narrative
  - Awkward dialogue
  - Continuity issues
  - **See Beta Reader Checklist for full list.**
- ✓ Make note of the issues you find, question to see if that's what the author intended, and offer suggestions for fixing it.
- ✓ Use the Track Change option to mark your comments and corrections directly in the manuscript.
- ✓ Be honest. If a joke doesn't work, let the author know. Don't brush off things that are awkward, factually incorrect, or out of character/theme/flow. It's better to question and suggest than let something potentially problematic slide.

- ✓ Be specific and descriptive with your feedback. Give the author something solid to work with. It helps if you give a brief explanation of why you're making a suggestion so the author is more open to consideration.
- ✓ Be kind. You want to avoid making the author feel defensive or hopeless. Try to "sandwich" critiques with praise or phrase them as a question/suggestion.
- ✓ Leave editing for spelling and grammar to an editor. If you see inconsistencies in spelling (ie. UK vs USA spellings) or a repeated editing related issues, make a note for the author to go through the manuscript specifically for that issue.
- ✓ Meet the deadline. The author is on a schedule and it takes time to incorporate beta notes into a revised draft, so please be sure to have your notes back to them on or before the deadline they've laid out.

The author may not take all your suggestions, but at least you've done your job by providing giving them a good foundation for their revisions. Once you've sent them your notes, let it go and trust the author to do what they believe is best for their story.