# **Inlet Beta Readers Club**

## Manuscript Profile Template & Prep Tips

# **Manuscript Profile Template**

Fill in the brackets and copy/paste your post onto the Club Hub.

1. [“Your name & email address.”]
2. I’m seeking a beta reader for my novel: [“Your Title Here.”]
3. Length of manuscript: [first 10, first 50, full manuscript of XXX words]
4. Genre of manuscript: [mystery, literary mainstream? fantasy? historical middle grade?]
5. This is a request for a [Second Pass, Revision Plateau, or Near Final] Inlet Beta Read.
6. I can share the document as a (include as many formats as you can accommodate): [Word doc, PDF, [epub](https://www.epubbooks.com/epub), Kindle, or otherwise]
7. Preferred format for our Afterwords with the author meeting: [Zoom, over the phone, or either on Zoom or over the phone].
8. Here is my novel’s blurb [xxx]. (100-250 words)

# **Manuscript Profile Prep Tips**

1. **[“Your name.”]**

**Tips:** This is an easy one! But if you’re wondering what to do if you have a pen name, please share both the name we know you by in the community, and your pen name.

1. **I’m seeking a beta reader for my novel: [“Your Title Here.”]**

**Tips:** Check out this post for some help settling on a title, if you need a nudge: <https://www.writersdigest.com/at-work-on-first-draft/7-tips-to-nail-the-perfect-title>. Titles help you put a “front-and-center” element of your novel out to your reader immediately, like a hand offered in greeting. They can also help you hold a key concept in mind as you write. So even if you haven’t settled on a title yet, I recommend you pick one for the Inlet Beta Read. If you feel hesitant about the title you’ve currently chosen, feel free to add “working title” in parenthesis.

1. **Length of manuscript: [first 10, first 50, full manuscript of XXX words]**

**Tips:** To gauge word count and set up formatting (for PDF or an ereader) start by getting your work “manuscript formatted.” <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-format-a-book-manuscript>

*Manuscript formatting: 12-point Times New Roman double-spaced pages. Paginated; one-inch margins; indented paragraphs. Start new chapters 1/3 down the page. Mark scene breaks with a centered hashmark or three asterisks.*

The PDF you create for a partial manuscript should map to the length your reader expects: 10 or 50 pages.

If you think the length will vary, please clear that with your Beta Reader first! If they expect 50 pages, they’ll plan for that level of reading. So if instead you give them 80, you’re breaking the agreement you have with your reader.

If you download/upload to an e-reader, start with manuscript formatting in your originating document first, so the length is as expected. THEN adapt based on the e-reader’s specifications. See the notes under #6 for additional tips.

1. **Genre of manuscript: [mystery, literary mainstream? fantasy? historical middle grade?]**

**Tips:** Genre designations at [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com/) can help you nail down yours. Or this article from Jane Friedman’s blog: <https://www.janefriedman.com/genre/> Identifying genre is essential when shopping your book around. Naming it now will give you a feel for how important it is when sharing your book with readers, and helps you look ahead to marketing.

1. **This is a request for a [Second Pass, Revision Plateau, or Near Final] Inlet Beta Read.**

**Tips:** Review the tips on the FAQ page to clarify your understanding of the three different manuscript phases for an Inlet Beta Read. You may not fall perfectly into one or the other. Pick the one that’s closest to your current phase.

1. **I can share the document as a (include as many formats as you can accommodate): [Word doc, PDF,** [**epub**](https://www.epubbooks.com/epub)**, Kindle, or otherwise]**

**Tips:** I recommend sharing your work as a PDF or downloading to an e-reader so the manuscript you give your reader cannot be edited. Rather than read with a pencil or using document that enables comments feature boxes, your readers should be looking at a manuscript that feels like a book feels. Granted, manuscript formatting looks like an “edit me” manuscript. But it’s likely the format you’ll need to use when you send to an agent/editor. So it’s also good to simulate that level of finalizing of your work too.

If you want to change up the formatting after you work out your page count (single spacing and adjusting indents for ease of reading, etc), you can discuss that with your reader. Remember, ease of reading is the name of the game. Make it as easy as possible for your reader to enter into the “fictional dream.” Don’t let formatting snafus break that dream.

1. **Preferred format for our Afterwords with the author meeting: [Zoom, over the phone, or either on Zoom or over the phone].**

**Tips:** A chat on Zoom is easy these days. Even if you don’t have an account, you and your partner can meet for the free 45 minutes, take a planned break, and start up again for another 45 minutes. The plus to Zoom: you can watch your reader’s reactions, as well as hear them. That kind of feedback may be useful as you determine how you work lands with a reader. But phone will be uninterrupted and can be easier to coordinate. Either works! What’s best for both you and your reader?

1. **Here is my novel’s blurb. (100-250 words)**

**Tips:** Okay, whoa there! Before you post, take some time to create a blurb for your own book. This may take you more time than you expect. What you create may become the first draft of your jacket copy. It doesn’t have to be perfect—but you’ll want to put some effort into sounding effortlessly alluring. Draw us in.

Jacket copy, you may ask, even for a 10 page manuscript? 50 pages? Yup. You’re introducing your book, enticing a reader—even into just 10 pages.

But does it have to be a jacket copy?

Here’s what I recommend. If what you have is a query pitch of 2-3 paragraphs or so (<https://thewritepractice.com/how-to-write-a-query-letter/> ) include that. If you have neither query nor jacket copy drafts, I recommend trying your hand at jacket copy.

What’s the difference? Nathan Bransford offers these tips for writing jacket copy: <https://nathanbransford.com/blog/2019/07/how-to-write-good-jacket-copy> .

**Basically, jacket copy is a reader hook. A query letter is an agent/editor hook.** For our purposes, use whatever you have ready. But default to jacket copy otherwise.

This will not feel like writing your novel. It will feel like you’re being asked to tame a whole different kind of animal than a novel—and you may struggle with snappy language, or ways to hook, despite the fact that you wrote the darn thing you’re describing.

That’s normal. You are creating marketing copy—and unless you’re a marketer by trade, it probably won’t feel natural.

One tip: Think movie trailers. And read read read examples—they’re everywhere on Amazon, Goodreads, the books on your shelves.

So take some time. Get tips in the posts above, the samples below. Try your hand.

If you want feedback before you post your profile, start by reaching out to either your alpha readers or even someone who’s not a writer. Try it out on a neighbor, a friend.

But you don’t need to make it perfect —you need to just make it.

You can do this!

Jacket copy samples:

* <https://matthewduffus.com/home/>
* <https://maggiesmithwriter.com/books/truth-and-other-lies/>
* <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/61312053>
* <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/58459956>
* <https://www.amazon.com/Crooked-Truth-Kristine-F-Anderson/dp/088146757X>
* <https://eileenschnabel.com/>
* <https://jessicavitalis.com/my-books-2/>