



Get ready to pitch!

HOW TO WRITE A BOOK DESCRIPTION



Learn the types of summaries and descriptions needed to pitch and sell your work.



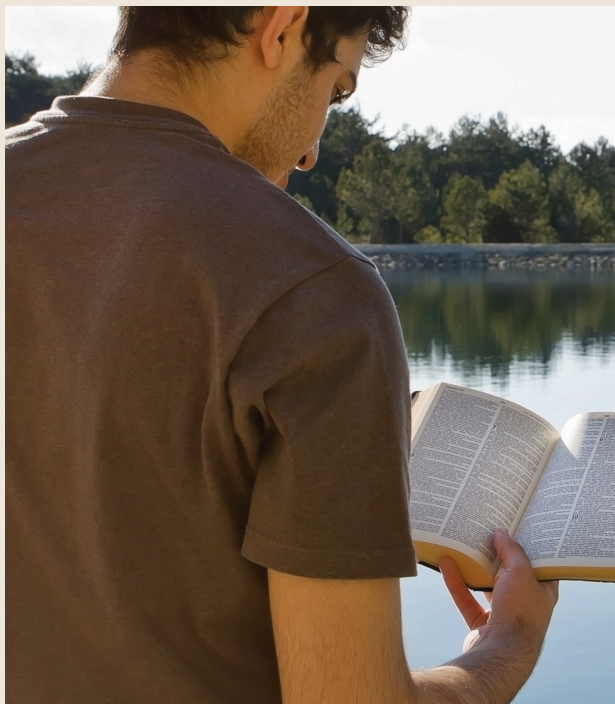
WHAT MAKES A GOOD HOOK?

Book descriptions are really product descriptions.

Start with your most impactful selling point to get book buyers past the Read More link.

This is your Hook, and it will be the lead for each version of your book description: the elevator pitch, social media pitch, bio blurb, and opening line for all points of sale.

You want to catch the reader's attention from the first line. What's the most compelling element of your story? For fiction, that could be the uniqueness of the main character or where the story takes place. Give the reader a peek at the beginning and share the initiating conflict that drives the story. Non-fiction should reveal the benefits and solutions they'll find in your book.



FICTION

State the problem your book will solve for the reader.

NON-FICTION

Include the initiating action that will drive the plot and the problem your character(s) must overcome.

WHAT ELSE GOES INTO A BOOK DESCRIPTION?

Your Hook

Newspapers, TV commercials, and even the sign in a shop window have one. It's a Hook, that one thing you comprehend at a glance that makes you look twice to consider the message.

Your opening line must be the best-written, exciting, and convincing part of your description. Make the hair on book buyers' arms stand on end, and their hearts beat slightly faster until they must learn what comes next. The single line of text will convey your tone, genre, and just enough details that book junkies will know immediately if they want to read every page.

Fiction

Readers want to connect with the story, whether it's the setting, the problem, or the characters. Consider which story element sets your novel apart from the slush pile.

- Location, Type of Story, Unique Character/Personalities

Non-Fiction

Provide sample takeaways. Non-fiction is inherently transformational. Showing the problem and its solution alludes to how the reader will benefit from your book.

- What will the reader learn?
- How is your approach to the topic unique? (Process, Insights)
- What is the benefit to the reader? (Gain Expertise, Master New Skills, Expand Understanding Of The Topic)



COPYEDITING

Language & Tone

Copyediting is an art. This is where you add the proverbial paint, nuances, and shine to your book description. Whether your book is fiction or non-fiction, you apply the same technique.

The tone, language, and word choice should match your manuscript. It's the same audience. Don't side with clever at the expense of clarity or use "smart-sounding" words when plain language is needed.



STYLE

Vary the lengths of your sentences. Our brains check out if it discerns a predictable pattern. Your hook is naturally long. The next sentence should give the eye and the ear a rest and lead compellingly to the following sentence and then the next.

Editing for conciseness sometimes leads to repeating a key point, benefit, or particular word. Avoid repeating words or talking points and make each word and the sentence it's in work for the right to stay. Repeating bits can be annoying to the reader, who wants clarity, not repetition.

Read it out loud. It's not Shakespeare, but it still needs to please the ear.



WHERE TO USE YOUR DESCRIPTIONS

Elevator Pitch

This is exactly how it sounds. Suppose an elevator ride is one minute and the attention span of the person next to you is half that. In that case, you need to pique their interest in a single sentence that makes them want more. As you network at conferences or strike up conversations at parties and coffee shops, this extraordinarily well-crafted and concise pitch makes your book and you memorable. Practice pitching to family and even strangers so you can deliver it with confidence and enthusiasm when the time comes to pitch to an agent.

Social Media

Have multiple versions of your elevator pitch that are under 200 characters. This leaves room for a link to your website or point of sales and allows you to test which version is most effective in getting people to click for more information. Your social networks are your platform for reaching readers and asking for a share across their connections to reach an expanded audience. Don't spam your followers, but rather ask their opinion on your pitch. You'll find support from unexpected places and the feedback is truly a gift. Say thank you, even if you don't agree.

Short Version

This is the opener for your long pitch and is visible above the Read More expansion link. Tagging it onto your personal Bio also gives you options to handle different character restrictions online. Use it on your back book cover or inside flap.

Long Version

Depending on your point of sale, you'll have an option for a longer description. If book buyers love your Hook and click to learn more, then this version is the deal-maker for book sales.

Take advantage of the extra character count to add reviews from other authors or credible book review sites. It's all social proof that your book will deliver the quality and enjoyment the reader wants. Use it on your back book cover or inside flap.



BUILD YOUR MEDIA KIT

Don't wait until you're on an agent's website to start writing your book description. Take the same, level-headed care that you used to write your manuscript in how you present your work.

Package your book cover, personal bio, full summary, and book descriptions. Having these on hand speeds up your response time for submission requests, website updates, and setting up your point of sales. It also ensures consistency at all reader touchpoints, a hallmark of effective brand marketing.

Beginning with your hook (which becomes your short description), add compelling elements that increase reader interest and convert them from browsing to buying.

NAILING THE DETAILS



Book Title

The Hook

If you had to say it all in one sentence - this is it. Make readers want more.

The Hero

Whom should readers care about? Main character? Society? Sub-group of a population?

The Conflict

What is the initiating conflict that drives the story?

The Journey

Give readers an idea of how the story will make them feel.

More Considerations

Genre Does your description language match the tone of your book?

Mood & Setting What are you telling your readers about the world they are entering?

Uniqueness How is your book different or better than similar reading selections?



Book Title

The Hook

If you had to say it all in one sentence - this is it. Make readers want more.

The Problem

What problem does your non-fiction book solve for the reader?

The Journey

What will the reader be able to do with the knowledge learned from reading your book?

The Promise

What solution, transformation or skill mastery does your book offer?

More Considerations

Tone Does your description language match the style of your book?

Uniqueness How is your book different or better than similar reading selections?

BOOK DESCRIPTION VERSIONS



Elevator Pitch

1 Sentence

Social Media Pitch

200 Characters

Short Description

500 Characters

Long Description

4,000 Characters

