A FREE GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

AMAZON REVIEW RULES



2026 edition

What is allowed. What is not.

GETBOOKREVIEWS

Amazon Review Rules for Authors: 2026 Edition

What is allowed, what gets accounts in trouble, and how to earn reviews legally

GETBOOKREVIEWS

Copyright

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This free guide is general information for authors and is not legal advice or an official statement of Amazon. It summarises Amazon's Community Guidelines as read in November 2026; the rules change, so read the current policy yourself and follow it. No review count, rating or sales result is promised or guaranteed. The authors of this guide are affiliated with GetBookReviews (getbookreviews.org), which is described in Chapter 8. AI disclosure: the text was written with the help of an AI language model (Claude, Anthropic) and edited by the GetBookReviews team. You may share this guide unchanged and free of charge.

Free edition, 2026.

Introduction

Few things worry an indie author as much as an email from Amazon about reviews. A review disappears. A book page loses its stars. An account gets a warning, or worse. And most of the time, the author did not set out to break anything. They asked a friend for a favour, joined a launch group, or thanked a reader with a small gift, and only later learned that Amazon sees such things differently.

This guide exists to close that gap. It explains, in plain English, what Amazon's own published rules say about reviews as of late 2026, what that means for authors in practice, and how to earn reviews in ways that cannot hurt you.

Three promises, and one refusal.

The first promise: the rules in this book come from Amazon's own Community Guidelines, which we read in full in November 2026 for this edition. Where we quote a rule, it is a rule on that page. Where we give advice that goes beyond the page, such as how to word an email, we say it is our advice and not Amazon's policy.

The second promise: it is practical. Every chapter ends with an Action Step, and the appendix has copy-ready wording you can adapt.

The third promise: it is honest about what nobody knows. Amazon does not publish how its detection works, how many violations lead to an account closure, or how long a review takes to appear or vanish. Anyone who tells you the exact numbers is guessing. We will not guess.

And the refusal: this book will not show you how to get around the rules, hide paid reviews from detection, or build a network of accounts. It will not help you ask for five stars. Those methods are against the rules, they put your whole author business at risk, and they are not necessary.

Who wrote this, and what it is for

This is a free guide from the team behind GetBookReviews, a free platform built by a community of readers and indie authors. We say so at the start so you can weigh our advice accordingly. Chapter 8 describes the platform, with its limits. Everything else in this book works without us.

> ***Start free today:*** *If you have a finished book and no reviews yet, you can list it on GetBookReviews at no cost and put it in front of readers who are looking for indie books. Create a free account here. No subscription, no payment, and no review is ever guaranteed or bought.*

The text was written with the help of an AI language model and edited by the team. It contains no invented anecdotes, no invented statistics and no made-up case studies. It is general information, not legal advice and not an official statement of Amazon.

How to use this book

Read Chapters 1 to 4 first: they cover where the rules come from, what is allowed, what is not, and where the line sits when family, friends and fellow authors are involved. Chapters 5 to 7 cover how to ask, which services to trust, and what to do when something goes wrong. Chapter 8 describes a free platform for readers and authors and where it fits. Chapter 9 gives you a thirty-day plan. If you are short on time, read Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and the checklist in the appendix.

CHAPTER 1

Where Amazon's Review Rules Come From

Authors often talk about "the Amazon review policy" as if it were one document. It is better to think of a small set of pages that work together. Knowing which is which saves you from relying on forum folklore.

The Community Guidelines

The central document is called Community Guidelines, published on Amazon's customer help pages. It covers every community feature, and the first on its list is "Reviews (including star ratings)". It also covers questions and answers, helpful votes, profile pages and more. It applies to what customers and others do on Amazon: posting text, photos, videos or links, marking a review as helpful, and interacting with other members. It does not apply to the content of products sold on Amazon, so the text of your book is not governed by it.

The page has a table of contents with sections such as What's allowed, What's not allowed, External links, Ads, conflicts of interest and promotional content, Compensated or incentivized reviews, and Consequences for violations. Those last four are the ones that matter most to authors, and Chapters 2 to 4 take them one by one.

Other pages that sit around it

Amazon's help pages also include pages on customer reviews in general, on promotional content, on the Vine programme, and on how Amazon works against review abuse. The Community Guidelines link to some of them. KDP, Amazon's self-publishing service, has its own help centre for publishing tasks, but the rules about reviews are customer-side rules: they follow you because you are also a person with an Amazon account, and because your readers have accounts too.

> **Tip:** Save the Community Guidelines page and the date you read it in your notes. If Amazon changes the wording, you will know which version you worked from.

Why you should read the source yourself

Policies change, and Amazon says so: the guidelines state that they are updated from time to time. A blog post from last year, or a book chapter such as this one, may be out of date. Treat any summary, including ours, as a map and the Amazon page as the territory. Before any campaign, open the current page and read the sections on promotional content and compensated reviews again. It takes ten minutes.

Who can post a review

One detail surprises many authors. According to the guidelines, a customer must have spent at least fifty US dollars on Amazon.com, using a credit or debit card, in the past twelve months to create reviews, including star ratings. The page adds that promotional discounts do not count towards that minimum. So a reader who is enthusiastic about your book may still be unable to post a review for a reason that has nothing to do with you. Do not take it personally, and never suggest ways to get around the requirement. Other Amazon stores can have other conditions; check the one you sell in.

What “violating” means

When the guidelines talk about consequences, they list what Amazon may do: remove content, limit someone’s ability to use community features, suspend or terminate an account, or withhold payments. The page adds that unusual reviewing behaviour can lead to limits on submitting reviews, and that if a review is rejected or removed for breaking the guidelines, the reviewer cannot review that product again. It also states that violations of state and federal law, including the Federal Trade Commission Act, may lead to legal action. Chapter 7 returns to this.

Action Step: Open the Community Guidelines page for the Amazon store you sell in. Read the sections “Ads, conflicts of interest, promotional content” and “Compensated or incentivized reviews” slowly. Write down in one sentence each what they mean for your next launch.

CHAPTER 2

What Amazon Explicitly Allows

Most advice about review rules is negative. Start with the positive list, because it shows how much room you actually have.

Readers may review honestly, positive or negative

The guidelines say shoppers may share their authentic experience with a product and give an honest opinion that reflects a sincere and unbiased view, whether positive or negative. They may also upload their own photos or videos, and leave star ratings from one to five without writing a full text review. That last point is useful to authors: a reader who does not want to write a paragraph can still leave a rating, and you can say so.

Free advance copies are allowed, with one condition

The page says shoppers may review free books (advanced reader copies) from authors or publishers, with the condition that the author or publisher cannot require a review in exchange for free books or try to influence the reader's opinion. This is the sentence on which every legitimate advance reader team rests. Read it as two separate conditions:

- The free book cannot be conditional on a review. A reader who takes your book and never writes anything must still be welcome to keep it.
- You cannot try to steer the opinion. That rules out asking for good ratings, supplying “suggested review text”, or hinting that a positive review would be appreciated more.

A seller may invite an honest review

The guidelines also allow a customer to post a review if a seller encourages them to leave an unbiased, un-incentivized review. Their example is a polite message inviting customers to share honest feedback by leaving a review. For authors, this is the basis for the note at the end of your book and for a neutral message to your newsletter list: you may invite an honest review. You may not offer anything for one, and you may not ask for a particular rating.

The Vine programme

Amazon’s Vine programme is the only route the page names for receiving free products in return for reviews. Vine reviews carry a label saying they are reviews of a free product, and the guidelines say that accepting free products or compensation directly from sellers or brands in exchange for reviews is strictly prohibited. The practical lesson for authors: you do not run a Vine-like system yourself. If Vine is offered for your book, it is Amazon’s programme with Amazon’s rules. Check the current Amazon help pages to see whether and how your titles can take part, because eligibility rules change.

Brand, seller and author accounts

The guidelines add a nuance on promotion: content posted through brand, seller, author or artist accounts about their own products or services does not need extra labelling. This does not mean an author may review their own book. It means an author account is a place where you may speak as the author, for example in

answers to questions. The ban on writing a review for your own product stays in force.

What this adds up to

You may invite honest reviews. You may give free copies, and you may let readers know they are free to review. You may make it easy to find the review page. You may thank people for their time as long as the thanks does not depend on a review. That is a wide field. The next chapter covers the walls around it.

Action Step: Write two sentences you are allowed to say to a reader: one that offers a free copy with no strings, and one that invites an honest review without naming a rating. Keep them; you will use them in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 3

What Amazon Does Not Allow

This is the chapter to read twice. The rules below come from the sections of the Community Guidelines on compensated or incentivized reviews and on conflicts of interest. The wording is ours, the substance is Amazon's.

No compensation of any kind

The guidelines say a customer may not create, edit or remove a review in exchange for compensation, and they list what counts: payments, refunds, discounts, products, gift cards, warranties or services. Two things in that sentence catch authors out.

First, the list is wide. A gift card is compensation. A discount on your next book is compensation. A free product from you in return for a review is compensation. An entry into a prize draw that depends on a review is, by the same logic, a benefit linked to a review, so keep it out of your plans.

Second, the rule covers editing and removing, not only writing. If you give someone something so that they change or delete a negative review, that breaks the rule too. The page says this applies even when a seller offers a refund to remove or change a negative review.

The page also says that reviews influenced by compensation "through any channel, including social media sites" violate the guidelines. A deal made in a private message or a Facebook group is not outside Amazon's reach just because it happened elsewhere.

No reviews on your own book or a competitor's

The guidelines say a customer may not post reviews on their own product, if they are also a seller, or on a competitor's product. They may not post reviews on products in which they have a financial interest. And they may not post reviews on products from sellers, authors, brands or artists with whom they have a personal connection.

In the section on conflicts of interest, the page names the groups: friends, relatives, employers, business associates and competitors. Amazon does not allow people to create, edit or post content about their own products or services, and the same goes for the products and services of those groups.

For an author, that means:

- You may not review your own book, under your name, a pen name or any other account.
- Your spouse, parents, children, cousins and close friends should not review your book.
- Your editor, cover designer, beta readers who are paid or part of your circle, and your co-authors should not.
- Other authors in your genre are competitors in Amazon's wording. Their reviews of your book are a risk, and yours of theirs.

No promotion posing as a review

The guidelines do not allow content whose main purpose is to promote a company, website, author or special offer. They also do not allow reviews written as a form of promotion, and they say reviews by someone with a financial interest or another conflict of interest are removed. A review that mostly says "visit my website for more" is promotion. Do not suggest that readers add links or offers to their reviews.

No external links and no affiliate codes

The page allows links to other products on Amazon but not to external sites, and it says URLs with referrer tags or affiliate codes are not allowed. So do not ask a reader to include your website, newsletter link or an affiliate link in a review. The same applies to your own posts in places where these rules apply.

No drawing customers away from Amazon

In the section on posting about products to which you are connected, the page says brands and businesses cannot take part in the community in ways that divert Amazon customers to a non-Amazon environment. It names advertising, special offers and calls to action. For authors, this is a good reason to keep your own community posts about the book and the reading experience, not about your mailing list sign-up bonus.

No multiple accounts, no coordination

The section on harassment says: “Don’t post from multiple accounts or coordinate with others” in order to drown out opinions. Read it as a general warning. If a group of friends posts reviews at the same time because you asked them to, a violation does not depend on the wording of any one review; the coordination itself is the problem.

No review before the product is delivered

Reviews must be based on actual experience, and the guidelines forbid posting a review before the product is delivered. For authors who send advance copies, this means readers should review once they have actually read the book, not on the day they receive the file. Do not ask anyone to post a review “ready for launch day” before they have read it.

Examples Amazon itself gives of violations

Near the end, the page lists situations customers should report. They are worth knowing because they show how Amazon thinks about the problem. Among them: a gift card in a package promising a prize in return for a five-star review; refund or replacement offers that ask a customer to change or remove a negative review; messages from sellers or fake review brokers about full reimbursement for buying and reviewing; being asked to contact sellers outside Amazon about reviews; and scanning a QR code or following a link that requires a review for a warranty. Notice the common thread: something of value is tied to a review, or the customer is steered away from leaving an honest one.

A short test

Before you do anything review-related, ask three questions.

1. Does the reader get something, now or later, because of a review? If yes, stop.
2. Do I, or someone close to me, have a stake in this review? If yes, it should not go on Amazon.
3. Am I asking for a specific rating, a specific wording, or a specific timing? If yes, stop.

Warning: This book cannot list every situation. If something feels borderline, it is. Leave it out, or ask Amazon through its official help channels and keep their answer in writing.

Action Step: Make a list of everyone with a personal or financial connection to your book. Decide, in writing, that none of them will review it on Amazon, and tell them kindly why. Offer them something else to do: sharing the book on social media, or recommending it by word of mouth.

CHAPTER 4

Friends, Family, Fellow Authors and Review Swaps

This is where good-natured authors most often get into trouble, so it deserves a chapter of its own.

"But my friend really loved it"

It may be true. Amazon's rule does not ask whether the review was honest; it asks whether there is a personal connection. The guidelines list friends and relatives among those whose products you cannot post content about, and they say customers may not review products from authors with whom they have a personal connection. A reader who loved the book and happens to be your neighbour is still a conflict.

What your friend can do: tell people about the book in person, post about it on their own social media, mention it in a book club, or review it on a site where such a connection is permitted and disclosed. Rules differ per site, so check each one. On Amazon, the safe answer is no.

Review swaps

A review swap is an arrangement in which two authors review each other's books. Whether both are honest or not, the arrangement ties a benefit to a review and creates a conflict of interest, because each author is the other's competitor in

Amazon's terms. It is one of the more common ways accounts get flagged. The simplest policy is: never agree to swap, never ask for one, and decline politely when someone offers.

If you want to support other authors, you can still read their books, recommend them in your newsletter, and leave a review on a store only if you have no connection with the author and nothing was exchanged. Many authors choose to avoid reviewing in their own genre on Amazon at all, simply to keep their record clean.

Group chats and launch teams

A launch team is not forbidden. A launch team that is told to post reviews on a given day, or in which people are given tasks and rewards, is a problem. If you run a group of advance readers, treat it as a reading group: send the book, say you would be glad to hear their honest thoughts if they choose to share them, and leave it there. No deadlines tied to rewards, no leaderboards for reviewers, no giveaways open only to people who posted.

Gifts and thank-yous

Sending a thank-you present to someone who reviewed your book is compensation after the fact, and it tells every other reader in the group what the real price of a review is. Do not do it. You can thank someone personally in an email, as long as it is clearly not tied to the review and you would have written it anyway. A neutral thank-you to the whole team for reading is fine; a special one for those who reviewed is not.

Paying for reviews, in any disguise

Disguises include "editorial reviews" sold by sites that only publish positive pieces, "reading fees", and packages that promise a number of reviews. If you pay and a review is part of what you get, treat it as compensation. Editorial and professional review services that charge for the work, publish regardless of rating and do not post on Amazon as customer reviews live in a different category. They are not

customer reviews, and you should use their quotes in the editorial section of your page, not as star reviews. Check how any service describes itself, and keep away from those that promise ratings or counts.

If you already did something on this list

It happens. Stop doing it, do not try to hide it by creating new accounts, and do not ask reviewers to delete things in a hurry in ways that look like coordination. Chapter 7 explains what to do if Amazon contacts you.

Action Step: Write a one-paragraph policy for your launch team and for friends who ask how to help. Keep it short: “Please read the book if you like. If you want to share your thoughts, do so honestly, on a site where you have no connection to me, or tell a friend. I will not ask for or reward any review.”

CHAPTER 5

How to Ask for Reviews the Right Way

Knowing the walls is half the work. Here is how to ask inside them, with wording that is neutral and effective.

The golden rule of asking

You may invite an honest review. You may not ask for a good one, and you may not reward one. So every message you write should pass a simple test: if a reader replied “I read it and I did not like it much”, would your answer be the same as if they said “I loved it”? If not, the message is wrong.

Ask at the end of the book

The end of your book is the best place to ask, because the reader has just finished it and nobody else has the same moment. A short note works:

> *If you enjoyed this book, I would be grateful if you shared an honest review on the store where you bought it. It helps other readers decide. If it was not for you, that is fine too, and I hope the next one suits you better.*

Notice what the note does not say: no rating, no thanks in the form of a gift, no link to anything but the review page. Links to the book's page on Amazon are fine; do not add referral tags or affiliate codes.

Ask your newsletter list

A newsletter is a good place to remind readers that reviews help. Keep it light and make it clear that it is optional. Mention that a rating alone is enough if they do not want to write more, since the guidelines allow star ratings without text. Do not run a contest around it, do not offer a bonus chapter for those who leave a review, and do not ask people to send you a screenshot as proof.

Free copies with no strings

If you send an advance copy to a reader, the message should say three things: here is the book, I hope you enjoy it, you are under no obligation. If you want to invite a review, add one sentence after that. Compare:

- Fine: "If you do decide to share your thoughts after reading, an honest review would be welcome. If not, no problem at all."
- Not fine: "Please leave a review when you are done." (This is a requirement, not an invitation.)
- Not fine: "I will send you the next book if you post a review." (A reward.)
- Not fine: "A five-star review would really help me." (Steering.)

Do not track who reviewed and who did not in order to remove the non-reviewers from your list. You may track the number of reviews your campaign produced as a statistic; you should not reward or punish individuals based on it. One approach that stays clear: keep a spreadsheet of how many copies went out and how many reviews appeared in total, without names.

Disclosing free copies

Amazon's guidelines allow ARC reviews, and other review sites and many countries' consumer rules expect reviewers to say when they received a free copy. You may suggest that readers mention it, in neutral wording. Do not tell them what to say about the book itself. The appendix has a standard line you can adapt.

Make it easy, not pushy

The most legitimate way to get more reviews is to make reviewing easier. Put a direct link to the review page at the end of your ebook. Say in your newsletter where on the product page to find the button. Explain that a short sentence is enough. Do not call out individual readers by name in public.

Timing

Ask once at the end of the book. Ask once in the newsletter after release. A gentle reminder to advance readers about two weeks after sending is reasonable, as long as it repeats the no-obligation message. More than that becomes pressure, and pressure is exactly what the guidelines on influencing opinion are about. A reader who has not responded in a month has made a decision.

What about reviewers who ask you for something?

Some reviewers, and some people posing as reviewers, will ask for payment, gifts or a swap. Say no. Do not argue. If they say others do it, say you follow Amazon's rules. If you feel a request is a scam or an attempt at a fake review scheme, Amazon has a form for reporting review compensation, described in the guidelines; use it.

Action Step: Rewrite your end-of-book note and your newsletter request with the three-point test: no reward, no rating, no pressure. Put the direct link to the review page at the end. Read both aloud to someone and ask them whether they feel pushed.

CHAPTER 6

Services, Programmes and Groups: Which Ones Are Safe

Authors are offered many routes to reviews. Here is how to judge them against Amazon's published rules, without naming and shaming individual companies.

The one question that sorts most of them

Ask: does the reader or the author receive anything because of a review, and does the service control who writes it or what it says? A service in which the review is the price of entry, or in which reviewers are paid, sent gifts or given points exchangeable for rewards in return for reviewing, is a service Amazon's compensation rule is aimed at.

Review clubs and exchange groups

Groups in which members review each other's books, or in which you must review to be allowed to receive reviews, are review swaps at scale. They fall under Chapter 4. Even if every member is sincere, the structure is the problem.

Paid “review services”

If a service guarantees a number of reviews, a minimum rating, or a timeline, do not use it. Nobody can honestly guarantee that free people will write reviews in a given way. Treat any such promise as a warning sign about the business, and remember that responsibility for a violation sits with you, because it is your book.

Advance reader platforms

Platforms that deliver advance copies to readers who sign up to read are a legitimate category, provided that they do not require reviews, do not pay for them, and do not steer ratings. How well a platform complies is something you have to check yourself. Chapter 7 of our companion guide, *How to Get Your First 50 Honest Reviews as an Indie Author*, has a five-question checklist for exactly this; the short version is below.

1. Is a review ever a condition of getting the book? It should not be.
2. Is anything of value, such as money, points that can be exchanged, prizes, or discounts, tied to a review? It should not be.
3. Can readers give any rating they honestly want, with no penalty? They should.
4. Does the platform say clearly, in its own terms, that it follows the store policy you care about?
5. Does it promise a number of reviews? It should not.

If a platform fails any of these for the store you are targeting, leave it out of your Amazon plans. You can still use it for other sites with different rules, but read their rules first.

Bloggers and newsletters

A blogger who receives your book and publishes a review on their own site is doing something the Amazon guidelines do not regulate. The guidelines apply to reviews posted on Amazon. A blogger posting the same review on Amazon is then a

customer subject to the rules above. Pitch bloggers with the same no-strings message as readers, and do not ask them to cross-post.

Amazon's own tools

On the author side, Amazon gives you tools that do not involve reviews at all: the product page, the editorial reviews and A+ content areas where you can add quoted praise from professional or editorial sources (check the current KDP and Author Central help for what is allowed and how), and the author page. Using these well often does more for a new book than chasing star ratings.

When someone sells you "just a few"

A small purchase, a few favours, one friend's account: it is the same rule. The guidelines do not set a minimum number. Do not tell yourself that a small violation is invisible. We do not know how Amazon detects patterns, and neither does anyone else outside Amazon.

> **Action Step:** List every review-related service, group or platform you currently use or plan to use. Apply the five questions to each. Cross out those that fail for Amazon.

CHAPTER 7

Consequences, Mistakes and What to Do If Amazon Writes to You

What Amazon says it may do

The guidelines list the consequences: removing content, limiting community features, suspending or terminating an account, and withholding payments. They also say that unusual reviewing behaviour can lead to limited reviewing ability, and that a review removed for violating the guidelines cannot be re-posted by that reviewer on the same product. The page adds that violations of law, including the Federal Trade Commission Act, may lead to legal action with civil and criminal penalties. Regulators in several countries pay attention to fake and paid reviews; if you sell in more than one country, check the rules there too.

What the page does not tell you

It does not say how many violations lead to which consequence. It does not say how reviews are detected. It does not say how long a removal takes or whether a removal always comes with a notice. Be wary of anyone who claims to know the thresholds. When a source states an exact number of “strikes”, ask where it comes from.

If a review disappears

Reviews can vanish for many reasons: the reviewer deleted it, Amazon removed it as a violation, or it was never published. You usually cannot tell which. Do not contact the reviewer to ask them to repost it, and do not offer anything. If you think a removal was a mistake, use Amazon's official help channels to ask, politely and in writing, and accept the answer.

If you receive a warning or a message from KDP or Amazon

1. Read it twice. Note what it names: a review, a book, an action.
2. Do not delete anything in a panic, and do not create new accounts or pen names to escape it.
3. Stop whatever practice might be the reason, immediately.
4. Reply through the official channel with a short, factual, polite answer: what happened, what you changed. Do not accuse Amazon, and do not blame others.
5. Keep copies of the message and your reply.

If you did nothing wrong, say so calmly and explain how your reader team works, with the no-strings wording you use.

If you suspect a competitor attack

Fake one-star reviews or review abuse aimed at your book can be reported. The guidelines describe reporting a review through the Report button under it, and a separate route for review compensation. Do not retaliate. Keep screenshots and dates, and report through the official forms.

If someone offers you compensation to remove a review, or asks you to

Neither is allowed. The guidelines name offering refunds to remove or change a negative review as a violation. Report it if it comes to you.

Build habits that protect you

- Keep a short written policy for how you ask for reviews and follow it every time.
- Never use more than one account for anything review-related.
- Keep records of how each reader got a free copy, and keep it neutral.
- Re-read the Community Guidelines before every launch, not just once.

Action Step: Write a one-page “if Amazon writes to me” plan: where messages arrive, who reads them, what you will do in the first hour, and what you will not do. Save it with your launch notes.

CHAPTER 8

GetBookReviews, a Free Place for Readers and Authors

We run this platform, so read this chapter knowing that. It is one option among several, and this chapter explains what it does and what it does not do, including how it relates to the Amazon rules in this book.

What it is

GetBookReviews is a free platform that connects indie authors with readers who like discovering new books. It was built by a community of readers and authors. Readers browse a library of indie books and pick the ones they want to read. Authors list a finished book and invite readers to read it. Readers can then, if they decide to, share an honest review in their own words on the review site the campaign names, such as Amazon, Goodreads, StoryGraph, LibraryThing or BookBub.

Free, and what that means

An account is free for readers and for authors. Campaigns run on Bookmarks, points inside the platform that have no cash value. Authors earn Bookmarks by reading other indie books from the library. Paid advertising places exist for authors who want extra visibility, but they are optional and never include a review.

How it works for authors

1. Create a free account and add your book. The team checks each book before it goes live.
2. Choose a campaign type and how many reader slots you want, from one to ten, and upload your EPUB, PDF or MOBI file.
3. Readers who like your genre pick your book and get the file.
4. Each reader has fourteen days to read and, if they decide to, to share an honest review. You get an email when a review comes in.
5. If a reader does not finish in time, the slot opens again for someone else.

A slot is an invitation, not a promise. Readers decide freely whether and what to write, every rating from one to five stars is equally welcome, and you may never ask for a positive review or offer anything in return for one. The platform also blocks review swaps: if you have picked an author's book, that author cannot pick yours.

How it relates to Amazon's rules

This is the question you should ask of any platform, ours included, and we want you to ask it. Amazon's guidelines allow reviews of free advance copies as long as nobody requires a review in exchange or tries to influence the opinion. The same guidelines say customers may not post reviews in exchange for compensation, and they list discounts, products and services as examples. GetBookReviews gives readers Bookmarks for picking a book, the same amount for any rating, whether or not they review. We cannot decide for you whether that fits the Amazon rules as Amazon reads them; only Amazon can. If you are not sure, name a different review site in your campaign, such as Goodreads, StoryGraph or LibraryThing, and read that site's current rules first. We do not tell readers what to write, and we never promise that a review will appear on Amazon or anywhere else.

Honest limits

The community is still growing and is small compared with the big stores. Reach depends on how many readers are active in your genre at a given time. If you need a hundred reviews in two weeks, no honest channel can promise that, and we cannot either.

Get started

You can create a free account and list your book here. It takes a few minutes. Pick one or two books in your own genre from the library while you wait, and see how readers write about books like yours.

Disclosure: The team that wrote this book also runs GetBookReviews.

Action Step: Apply the five questions from Chapter 6 to GetBookReviews and to one other platform. Decide which review sites you will name in a campaign, and write down the date you last read their rules.

CHAPTER 9

A Thirty-Day Plan That Stays Inside the Rules

This plan is for an author with a finished book and few or no reviews. It assumes you want honest reviews and will take the pace the readers set.

Days 1 to 3: Clean up and read

- Read the current Community Guidelines for your store, the sections on conflicts of interest and compensated reviews first.
- Write down everyone who is connected to the book, as in Chapter 3, and tell them kindly that they should not review it on Amazon.
- Remove anything from your site, emails, social posts or back matter that offers a reward for a review, asks for a rating, or links reviewers to an offer. Check old posts too.

Days 4 to 7: Prepare what readers will see

- Add the end-of-book note from Chapter 5, with the direct link to the review page. Update the file in your publishing dashboard.
- Make sure your product page is clear about genre and content so the right readers arrive. Mismatched readers write confused

reviews.
- Prepare a clean ARC package: file, two-line description, no-obligation message.

Days 8 to 14: Reach the right readers

- Send the book with the no-strings message to the readers who already like your work: your newsletter, your social followers, people who have written to you.
- List the book on one free reading platform for readers, and read that platform's rules first.
- Pitch two or three bloggers or newsletters in your genre with the individual pitch in the appendix. Do not ask for a particular rating and do not ask them to cross-post.

Days 15 to 21: Ask once, then wait

- Send one reminder to advance readers, repeating that there is no obligation.
- Post one neutral request in your newsletter, as in Chapter 5.
- Do not message individual readers about whether they have reviewed.

Days 22 to 30: Handle what arrives

- Read every review once and answer none of them. Arguments with reviewers rarely help and can draw attention.
- Note recurring comments about the blurb, the opening and the ending. Fix the blurb first; it is the cheapest change.

- Update your tracking sheet: copies sent, reviews that appeared in total, and what you learned. No names.

A realistic result

Nobody can say how many reviews thirty days will give you. Some authors will see a few, some none. Treat the first month as a way to build a clean base: a book that is ready, a reader list that grows, a habit of asking politely, and an account with nothing to worry about. Reviews that come this way last.

> **Action Step:** Put the thirty days in your calendar now, one line per week, and set a reminder on day 30 to read the Community Guidelines again.

Conclusion

The rules are not complicated once you see their logic. Amazon wants reviews that reflect real, unbiased experiences of customers who have no stake in the product. It allows you to give free books and to invite honest opinions. It does not allow you to attach anything of value to a review, to steer ratings, to use people close to you, or to coordinate groups. Everything in this book follows from those few ideas.

Reviews are slow, and they are not under your control. What is under your control is the quality of the book, how clearly you describe it, how easy it is for a happy reader to say so, and how clean your own record is. Keep your record clean and the rest can grow at its own pace.

Re-read the Community Guidelines before every launch, and treat this book as a map, not as the rules.

Start here: if you have a finished book and no reviews yet, create a free GetBookReviews account, add your book and pick one book in your genre from the library. It costs no money, and it follows the principles of this guide: no swaps, no requested ratings, no promised reviews. We run the platform, so judge it by the five questions in Chapter 6 like any other.

Appendix

A. Pre-launch checklist

- [ ] I have read the current Community Guidelines for my store and noted the date.
- [ ] Nobody with a personal or financial link to the book will review it on Amazon, and I have told them.
- [ ] I will not review my own book or a competitor's book, with any account.
- [ ] My messages never ask for a rating, never offer a reward and never set a deadline tied to a reward.
- [ ] My end-of-book note and newsletter request pass the three-point test from Chapter 5.
- [ ] I use no service that guarantees reviews, ratings or counts.
- [ ] I have no review swaps, exchange groups or launch-team prizes.
- [ ] My pages and posts contain no offers linked to reviews.
- [ ] I have a written plan for what to do if Amazon contacts me.

B. Message to an advance reader

> *Hello [name], thank you for being willing to read [title]. The file is attached. There is no obligation at all: read it if it appeals to you and tell me, or nobody, what you think. If you decide to share an honest review, it is welcome wherever you like to review books; if you do, please mention that you received a free copy. Enjoy the read, [author].*

C. Request in a newsletter

> *[Title] is out. If you have read it and want to share what you thought, an honest review on the store where you bought it helps other readers decide. A star rating alone is enough if you do not want to write more. There is no reward and nothing to send me. Thank you for reading.*

D. Pitch to a blogger or newsletter

> *Hello [name], I read your post on [specific post] and thought you might like [title], a [genre] about [one line]. I would be glad to send a free copy; there is no obligation to review it, and I am not asking for any particular opinion. If you would like it, tell me which format you prefer. Thank you for your time, [author].*

E. Wording to avoid

Instead of	Why it is a problem
“Leave a 5-star review and get a free book”	compensation and a requested rating
“Review my book and I will review yours”	a swap and a conflict of interest
“Send me a screenshot of your review”	links a reward or favour to the review
“Give me a good review so I can reach 50”	steering the opinion
“Our launch team posts on release day”	coordination and possible reviews before reading

F. Questions for any service, group or platform

1. Is a review ever a condition of getting the book?
2. Is anything of value tied to a review?
3. Can readers give any rating they honestly want?
4. Does it say which store rules it follows?
5. Does it promise a number of reviews?

G. Source and update note

The Amazon rules summarised in this edition come from Amazon’s Community Guidelines on its customer help pages, read in November 2026. Amazon updates the page from time to time, so read the current version before you act, and check

the help pages for the store you sell in. This guide is not legal advice and not an official statement of Amazon.

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