

MYSTERY/THRILLER

Overall Evaluation

1. Is the entry presented in an acceptable book organizational layout (i.e., introduction, preface, foreword, afterword, and/or author biography) and in format (i.e., margins, spacing, chapter/section divisions, overall readability, etc.)?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Please rank the aptness of the book title in relation to the themes and content of the book.
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Opening

1. Does the opening draw you in by starting with a compelling narrative or Voice?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Have you been intrigued enough to want to read on?
 - a. Excellent

- b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Plot Premise

1. Does the plot make sense in terms of the dramatic or overall focus of the book?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Is there enough conflict and inherent drama to sustain the story?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Does every scene have a purpose in moving the story forward, either in terms of plot or the story journey the character(s) take?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average

- d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Did you get to the end and find no plot holes, no plot inconsistencies, and no problems with plot plausibility or believability?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Was the "Promise" of the Opening fulfilled by the conclusion of the book so that you got to the end and felt that the author had successfully navigated the culmination of the plot and any subplots?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

6. Did the author handle any subplots with skill and effectiveness without letting the subplot overrun the main plot?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
7. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Setting/World Building

1. Has the author created a strong sense of place and circumstance in such a way that you believe in it?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Does the world created in the book feel “real” and “true” to the extent that you can lose yourself in them completely?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Do setting and imagery add to mood and tone, and are they woven effectively throughout?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Were you able to suspend disbelief in the setting or world in which the tale takes place?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

5. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Specific Genre/Topic Criteria

1. The book you are reading should be a mystery and/or thriller. (There can be significant overlap between the two.) Mysteries generally feature a sleuth (or team of sleuths), clues, detecting, and a resolution. A thriller generally features fast pacing, frequent action, and resourceful heroes who must thwart the plans of more powerful and better equipped villains. Literary devices such as suspense, red herrings, and cliffhangers are often used. Has the author written a story of this type that successfully fits in one or both of those categories?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. A mystery or thriller may have secondary plot lines (such as romance, coming out, family issues, alcoholism, etc.). Has the author avoided allowing subplots to hijack the story so that the mystery or thriller elements are at the forefront?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Has the author utilized thorough research where called for and detailed that information for the reader so that you believe in and understand the elements of the case or the events that occur, but are not confused or bored?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. How well does this book employ clever, imaginative, and/or unique ideas and avoid being moralistic, simple, or overly dramatic?

- a. Excellent
- b. Above Average
- c. Average
- d. Below Average
- e. Poor/Unacceptable

5. Does the main protagonist face a challenging adversary who is also a well-drawn character? If there is no adversary, does the main character face challenging circumstances that engage the reader?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
6. Does the author tie up all loose ends by the end of the story with an exciting climax that gives readers the pay-off they are looking for?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
7. Is there variety in tone, style, and content where appropriate? Or do all the parts, chapters, or plotlines strike the same tone and seem unremarkable?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
8. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Characters/Characterization

1. Has the author written a memorable and well-rounded narrator or main protagonist (or two or more main protagonists if the story calls for it) with traits and flaws that make them unique and human?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Do you empathize with the main character(s) and hope for their happiness and success?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Does the main character grow as a human being in the story, and is that growth clearly connected to emotional challenge? OR – if the main character does NOT grow (as happens in a Tragedy or plot with an anti-hero), does the character's failure to grow and change make sense in the context of the book?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Secondary characters should be distinct and differentiated and should not seem like cardboard clones. Does the author handle the secondary characters well without making them boring or allowing them to take over the protagonist's role(s)?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average

- c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Are the actions of all characters consistent with the manner in which they have been characterized (for example, if a character is presented as a liar and a cheat, is this reflected in her decision and behavior, assuming growth and change may occur)?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
6. Are the descriptions of the characters mostly fresh and effective, making use of imagery, metaphor, and apt detail while avoiding clichés and derivative details?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
7. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Dialogue

1. Is the spoken dialogue natural sounding and credible for the characters? Does it sound fresh and colorful rather than derivative and flat?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

2. Does the dialogue reveal and nuance character interactions while avoiding repetitiveness and unrealistic over-telling?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Does the dialogue enhance and move the story, avoiding purposeless “information dumps” and/or rambling?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Has the author made good use of interior Voice (especially in the case of the main character[s])? Is there an appropriate balance between the external narrative/exposition and the internal thoughts and the spoken dialogue?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Narrative/Structure

1. Narrative consists of the balance between the descriptive exposition (the Telling of the story and the action and dialogue (the Showing) in a book. Is there a balance between the showing and the telling that feels effective and unforced?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

2. Are narrative passages necessary and compelling? Are narrative passages balanced well with dialogue and scenes of action?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

3. Does the narrative flow well without being too spare, saggy, bloated, or cluttered with trivial detail?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable

4. Does the writing move you along through the story with mastery and effectiveness within the scope of the structure?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average

- d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Within the structure, do the timelines make sense so that you are grounded and know where you are in time? Where needed, are you given cues (or dateline/chapter headers) that allow you to keep track of when and where you are?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
6. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Style/Voice

1. Is the author's writing vivid, evocative and, readable, displaying variety in tone, style, and content where appropriate?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Are Point of View (POV) and Perspective clear at all times? When Perspective transitions occur between characters, are they purposeful and smooth? Or does it seem the author is head-hopping without a good reason to?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Is the writing grounded in the senses with description balanced between the intellectual and sight, smell, taste, texture, sound, and sixth sense? Are all the senses used in proper proportions?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Does the writing (whether hard-edged and difficult or softer and sweeter) have a beauty to it that is striking and attractive, that gives you reading pleasure?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average

- d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Are errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and facts so rare that they in no way interfere with your reading experience?
- a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
6. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Overall Impressions

1. Flaws aside, how intriguing, memorable, and/or touching did you find this book? When you reached the end, did you feel an impact – a powerful cumulative effect – from the reading?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
2. Is there a pleasing balance between the emotions evoked and the intellectualism of the book?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
3. Did you find a fair amount of universality so that the majority of the target audience for the topic/subject/themes would be satisfied with this book?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average
 - d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
4. Even if you found that you did not “like” the book (because of topic or personal reasons), is the book still remarkable and effective for what the author was trying to accomplish?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Above Average
 - c. Average

- d. Below Average
 - e. Poor/Unacceptable
5. Please provide additional information regarding your assessment.

Lesbian Content

1. The guidelines for the Goldie Awards require that each work nominated “must contain significant lesbian content, characters, and/or themes.” Lesbian content includes: The main character identifies as a lesbian, and/or the main character is or ends up in a lesbian relationship, and/or the theme or plot deals with lesbian issues and/or lesbian life.
 - a. Significant lesbian content
 - b. Some lesbian content
 - c. No lesbian content

Judge’s Summary

1. Briefly, please summarize what you thought this book was all about.