



# North Atlantic Books

## Beta Reader Guidelines

In addition to working with your editorial team at North Atlantic Books, we recommend seeking out 3-5 **beta readers** to review your manuscript. Beta readers can be professional colleagues, but are ideally members of your target audience, who offer a cursory opinion on the structure and concept of a manuscript. A beta read typically takes place prior to or concurrently with NAB's in-house developmental edit, but **must be completed at least one month before your production-ready manuscript is due** to ensure you have time to review any comments with our editor and incorporate changes as necessary.

Beta readers are typically given a draft version of the manuscript (or specific chapters of the manuscript) to review, and are asked to give a **big picture overview** of their reading experience. Below are some recommendations on how to approach a beta reader for a review.

### 1. Framing

Begin by describing what a beta read is: a read-through for overall ideas and impressions as either a professional colleague or the target audience. Let readers know that you're not looking for corrections on specific phrasing or any copyediting help. Offer clear instructions on how you'd like your feedback: do you want readers to use the comment tool in Word or Google Docs, or would you prefer an email summary?

### 2. About the Book

Offer a brief, one-sentence pitch of the book's intention, as well as a short paragraph explaining the thesis and intent of the book. Share an audience sketch—an overview of who the primary, secondary,

and tertiary intended readers are—and why you think this book will appeal to them. Include any additional information that you think readers should keep in mind as they review your book. For example, is there a specific problem your book is addressing? Make sure beta readers know to look out for this problem and let you know if the book sufficiently addresses it.

### 3. Specific questions

Provide 10-15 questions for your beta reader to respond to directly. You might also wish to include a few comments in the margins of the manuscript to encourage attention to certain paragraphs or concepts. Here are some sample questions that you might ask your beta reader:

- What is your favorite part of the book and why?
- Which is your least favorite part and why?
- Are the chapters well organized? Does the order make sense?
- Did you feel like anything was missing from the book? What was missing, and where do you think it belongs?
- Did you feel that the book did a good job of reaching the audience we identified? What group of readers do you think would be most interested in this book?
- Are the reflections/exercises/prompts engaging? Would you fill out these prompts?
- Were the examples provided helpful or distracting? Why did they/didn't they work?
- Did we overlook a topic that you would like to see included?
- Is any content irrelevant, redundant, or unnecessary? Feel free to use track changes or strikethrough to mark text you suggest deleting.
- What did you think about the writing style? Did you feel it should have been more casual or more professional?
- Would you recommend this book to your peers?