

Leigh Michaels

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Dear Contributor: We are returning your submission because it does not meet our needs at this time....

Dear Ms. Writer: Thank you for your submission. We have reviewed it carefully, but find that your conflict is contrived and your characters underdeveloped....

Dear Contest Entrant: We are pleased to forward your scores from The Romance Contest. Your entry has received a rating of 3.4 (on our scale of 1 to 10)....

It's disillusioning to send off submissions and queries to agents or editors and wait for months, only to get a form rejection letter or a few general comments with no explanation of how they apply to your manuscript.

It's annoying to spend lots of money and time on contest entries, only to receive a generic score with little feedback.

It's tiresome to sign up for classes or workshops only to find that the instructor's time is too limited to give in-depth attention to the work of each student.

Award-winning romance author and writing teacher Leigh Michaels offers **A Word's Worth** – a critique service to help writers avoid outcomes like these. Services include individual, personal, in-depth analysis of synopses, first chapters, partial manuscripts, proposals, or full manuscripts. This multi-published author and teacher will offer feedback on your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, critique your work, and give concrete suggestions for moving your book toward publication.

Leigh offers several packages to best serve the needs of authors at any stage of their writing careers. For approximately the cost of a couple of contests, you can receive a full critique of your first chapter and synopsis. For about the cost of a class, you can receive a detailed evaluation of an entire manuscript.

LEIGH MICHAELS is the author of more than 75 contemporary romance novels. Six of her books have been named as finalists for best traditional romance of the year in the Romance Writers of America RITA contest. More than 30 million copies of her books have been published in 25 languages and 120 countries around the world. She is also the author of a number of non-fiction books, including *Writing and Selling the Romance Novel*, to be published by Writers Digest Books in early 2007. She has taught writing for more than ten years at the University of Iowa's Summer Writing Festival, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Gotham Writers' Workshop, and Barnes & Noble University. A number of her students have gone on to publish book-length romance with commercial publishers including Harlequin, Silhouette, Kensington, and others. Visit her website at www.leighmichaels.com.

First chapter/synopsis critique

Ideal for beginning authors or for authors wanting feedback on a new idea before investing large amounts of time in the writing process. Well suited for the author who has considered entering contests in the hope of receiving helpful comments.

Send:

- Up to 25 pages total (up to 6,250 words) in standard manuscript format
- Include the first chapter, usually about 20 pages in standard manuscript format
- Include a synopsis (summary of the entire storyline), usually about five pages in standard manuscript format

Receive:

- Written analysis of the strong points and weaknesses of the storyline
- Written critique of the first chapter
- Margin notes and comments on the manuscript
- Evaluation of whether further editing/critiquing would be of value at this point

Fee: \$95.00

Turnaround time: within 30 days, or as arranged

The fee for a first chapter/synopsis critique may be credited toward the cost of a full manuscript evaluation (on the same manuscript), if the manuscript is submitted within 60 days after the first chapter/synopsis critique is returned to the author.

Manuscript-in-progress evaluation

Ideal for the author who has a partial manuscript and would like advice, feedback, and suggestions to assist in completing it. Also well suited where an editor has expressed interest in an idea or a proposal, but the book isn't finished.

Send:

- A section of the manuscript (any length) in standard manuscript format
- a synopsis in standard manuscript format

Receive:

- Written critique of the submitted section
- Written critique of the strong points and weaknesses of the synopsis/storyline
- Margin notes and comments on the manuscript
- Suggestions for revisions and completion

Fee: \$2.50 per page (manuscript plus synopsis) with a minimum charge of \$195.00

Turnaround time: within 45 days, or as arranged

Full-manuscript evaluation

Ideal for the author who has a finished draft but needs help in polishing and strengthening the book before submitting. Also well suited for situations where the author has submitted the manuscript without receiving helpful editorial feedback, or where an editor has indicated potential interest if the author revises.

Send:

- Full manuscript, in standard manuscript format

Receive:

- Written critique of the story as a whole
- Evaluation of the strong points and weaknesses
- Margin notes and comments
- Suggestions for revisions or changes

Fee: Manuscripts up to 250 pages, \$2.00 per page with a minimum charge of \$295.00
Manuscripts over 250 pages, \$1.75 per page with a minimum charge of \$495.00

Turnaround time: within 60 days, or as arranged

Proposal/ submission critique

Moving from manuscript to submission isn't an easy step. The book is finished, but marketing it is an entirely different matter, requiring a new skill set. Leigh offers help to make sure the proposal is tight and clear so it has the best possible chance with the editor.

Ideal for the author who has a complete manuscript and is ready to begin a serious marketing effort. This critique focuses on presentation as well as story.

Send:

- Up to 60 pages (maximum of 15,000 words) in standard manuscript format
- Include first three chapters in standard manuscript format
- Include synopsis (maximum ten pages, or the length requested by the targeted publisher)

Receive:

- Written analysis of the story storyline
- Written critique of the proposal package
- Margin notes and comments
- Suggestions for revisions or changes

Fee: \$195.00

Turnaround time: within 30 days, or as arranged

To submit:

Enclose the information/submission form, filled out, signed and dated.

Enclose the requested materials in *standard manuscript format*.

(Standard manuscript format: Double-spaced in 12 point type, in Times New Roman or Courier font, with one inch margins all around the page, averaging 250 words per page. Smaller type sizes are not acceptable. A printable example is available at www.leighmichaels.com)

Enclose check, money order, or credit card information for the stated fee.

Enclose a self-addressed envelope large enough and already stamped with sufficient postage to return your materials to you.

If you wish to receive notification that your materials have been received, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard.

Mail your package to A Word's Worth, Manuscript Critiquing & Evaluation, care of Leigh Michaels, P.O. Box 935, Ottumwa IA 52501-0935.

Questions?

Email leigh@leighmichaels.com. Please put "critiquing service" in the subject line to ensure that your query is properly directed.

Time pressure?

Need a quicker turnaround? Email leigh@leighmichaels.com to work out a schedule.

Want to look at samples?

To receive a packet of sample materials, including

- an illustration of the standard manuscript format
- a sample critique

email leigh@leighmichaels.com. (Please put "request for submission packet" in the subject line. Must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view.)

OR send a self-addressed stamped (two first class stamps) business-sized envelope to Words Worth, Leigh Michaels Critiquing Service, P.O. Box 935, Ottumwa IA 52501-0935. Materials can also be downloaded at www.leighmichaels.com.

Leigh reserves the right to return submissions if she feels she's not the best person to evaluate your work. In such a case, the author's check will be promptly returned along with the submitted materials.

Stated fees are introductory rates and are subject to change. In the event of a fee change, previous rates will be honored for authors who have materials pending.