

Manuscript Assessment What to Expect

The Literary Consultancy provides developing writers with an **honest, detailed** and **professional** manuscript appraisal from a highly skilled editor. Our pool of professional editors (whom we call 'readers') combine decades of industry experience to provide writers with feedback, to move writing projects forward. Our readers are all trained by TLC in how to respond to work by our writers. We have 86 currently on our books, and our in-house team hand matches each incoming manuscript with an appropriate reader.

For a detailed break-down of the manuscript assessment process as well as our full terms and conditions, please see the website.

We have selected feedback here to illustrate particular points we'd like to highlight to you as you submit your work, but for more, do see our [Testimonials Page](#) and our [Success Stories](#).

Managing expectations

"My TLC report was absolutely brilliant. It was both encouraging but largely critical which was exactly what I had hoped it would be. My TLC reader has provided me with the drive and confidence I've been looking for to complete this book."

At TLC, our aim is to make writers more self-aware about their own writing, providing clarity and insight, and where appropriate, to get a sense of possible markets and readerships. We will provide a written report to you, as a PDF document (or printed if requested) which responds editorially to the work you have submitted. The report is prepared by your chosen reader, and checked in-house by TLC. You can expect a report of 1,500 words minimum (full MS minimum 2,000 words), focusing on key areas for development. Usually reports are presented with sub-headed sections representing these key areas. These may include issues of voice, style, character development, pacing, structure etc. Each report is unique to the text submitted and so each editorial response will be tailored to the work in hand, and will respond where necessary to any additional issues raised in your covering letter.

A manuscript assessment may comment on language, but do be aware this is not a copy-editing or proofreading service. It is also important to be aware that whilst TLC does work with literary agents directly (see next section), the manuscript assessment is not in and of itself a fast-track to a literary agent and we cannot guarantee publication for any work submitted to us. If you'd like to read more about our founding reading principles, you may wish to download the free ebook, ['Is There Anybody Reading Me?'](#) by our founder Rebecca Swift, originally published in 1999 and re-released by TLC Press.

What is TLC's view on 'commerciality'?

We are publishing-agnostic, meaning that while we are well-connected with literary agents and publishers, we do not believe that there is any one way to find readerships,

or indeed that so-called 'traditional' publication is the single aim of every book. Each book is different, just as each writer is different, and we are committed to handling each with due care and attention. In instances where a text is deemed particularly commercially viable, we ask TLC readers to flag this through a formal in-house process, at which point we will be in touch with the writer to discuss the possibility of working further on the text, and submitting it to literary agents. This system operates on a highly selective case-by-case basis. There is no charge to the writer for this service, though we may encourage further editorial work. We will always outline our working relationship clearly with the writer before this process begins.

The importance of objective distance

"The assessment was delivered at 7.30am my time. I sat down to read. By 7.35am I was seething with anger. A cup of coffee and a second read through an hour later and I began to calm down. By mid-day I was agreeing with my wife that it was money well spent. Now Gar (my travelling companion) is reading the notes and enthusiastically declaring it is a fantastic review with clear advice. It's now 5pm and I'm compelled to write to you and thank you and the reader so very much. I know what I'll be doing for the next few weeks."

We strongly encourage you to use the time between submitting the work and receiving your report to establish some critical distance from the writing. Equally, at the point of receiving the report, we suggest a few days away from it following an initial read, to allow the feedback to settle properly. We have found it can be much easier to come to a text with fresh eyes, and that self-editing skills are better deployed when such distance has been established.

Critical assessment as a 'pivot'

"As a professional non-fiction writer I struggled for years to make the transition to fiction. TLC has enabled me to take a methodical approach, by providing unbiased, substantive feedback at a reasonable price. I still don't feel ready to approach an agent or publisher, but for the first time I understand precisely what I must do to get my fiction into print."

Feedback from writers has showed us that manuscript assessment reports can be transformational. They can be encouraging, supportive, inspire confidence, but it's also vital to understand that we believe that in order for feedback to be truly valuable in the long-term, it is essential that we are also truth-telling (one writer told us: 'my report ruined my Christmas but it changed my life - I would not be a published writer without it'). We will not be misleading in any way, and that does mean that reports can sometimes make for difficult reading. We understand that this is a potentially exposing process, and we will therefore send you a document along with your report which has some further detail about how to approach reading and handling your report, to help maximise the value of the feedback as you move forwards.

We will be in touch once your report is ready. The process usually takes 4-6 weeks (excepting quick turnarounds which will be delivered to you within 10 working days).

If you need anything meantime, do drop us a line at info@literaryconsultancy.co.uk