

WRITER *Spark* CHEAT SHEET

5 STEPS FOR WRITING GREAT BACK COVER COPY

Back cover copy is an incredibly important marketing tool for your book. It includes a hook to grab the reader's attention. It then hits the core elements of the plot in the most enticing manner possible.

This copy is the second thing a potential reader will use to judge whether or not the book is for them (first is the cover).

Just like a teaser from a television show or a movie trailer, the back cover copy in a book gives the potential audience enough about the story to pique their interest. It is what draws them in and gets them to commit to reading the first page (which is the third step in a reader's decision-making process).

Here are the five steps for writing really excellent back cover copy (plus a bonus 6th for cozy mysteries).

1. Hook them early.

Write a one or two sentence hook about your story to grab readers' attention. (With a cozy mystery, it often involves a pun connected to the theme.)

2. Introduce the protagonist.

Who is the protagonist who will carry the story? Give his/her name and the life conflict he/she faces at the beginning of the story (this protagonist is the amateur sleuth in a first in series book).

3. Show what his/her future could hold.

What is the protagonist's chance for success or happiness within the new world?

4. Introduce the conflict.

Show the disruption of the protagonist's new life based on the major conflict (for mystery: because of the murder).

5. Give the stakes.

What happens if the conflict is not resolved (for mystery: if the crime is not solved)? Another way to look at this is: What is the protagonist at risk of losing if the conflict is not resolved?

6. Bonus for cozy mysteries: Make it punny.

Make sure there are puns and/or figurative language connecting the copy to series hook (theme).