



The First Five Pages: A Writer's Guide to Staying Out of the Rejection Pile

By Noah Lukeman

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Whether you are a novice writer or a veteran who has already had your work published, rejection is often a frustrating reality. Literary agents and editors receive and reject hundreds of manuscripts each month. While it's the job of these publishing professionals to be discriminating, it's the job of the writer to produce a manuscript that immediately stands out among the vast competition. And those outstanding qualities, says New York literary agent Noah Lukeman, have to be apparent from the first five pages. *The First Five Pages: A Writer's Guide to Staying Out of the Rejection Pile* reveals the necessary elements of good writing, whether it be fiction, nonfiction, journalism, or poetry, and points out errors to be avoided, such as: - A weak opening hook - Overuse of adjectives and adverbs - Flat or forced metaphors or similes - Undeveloped characterizations and lifeless settings - Uneven pacing and lack of progression. With exercises at the end of each chapter, this invaluable reference will allow novelists, journalists, poets, and screenwriters alike to improve their technique as they learn to eliminate even the most subtle mistakes that are cause for rejection. *The First Five Pages* will help writers at every stage take their art to a higher - and more successful - level.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The difference between *The First Five Pages* and most books on writing is that the others are written by teachers and writers. This one comes from a literary agent--one whose clients include Pulitzer Prize nominees, *New York Times* bestselling authors, Pushcart Prize recipients, and American Book Award winners. Noah Lukeman is not trying to impart the finer points of writing well. He wants to teach you "how to identify and avoid bad writing," so that your manuscript doesn't come boomeranging back to you in that self-addressed, stamped envelope. Surprise: Agents and editors don't read manuscripts for fun; they are looking for reasons to reject them. Lukeman has arranged his book "in the order of what I look for when trying to dismiss a manuscript," starting with presentation and concluding with pacing and progression. Each chapter addresses a pitfall of poor writing--overabundance of adjectives and adverbs, tedious or unrealistic dialogue, and lack of subtlety to name just a few--by identifying the problem, presenting solutions, giving examples (one wishes these weren't quite so obvious), and offering writing exercises. It's a little bizarre to think about approaching your work as would an agent, but if you are serious about getting published, you may as well get used to it. Plus, Lukeman has plenty of solid advice worth listening to. Particularly fine are his exercises for removing and spicing up modifiers and his remedies for all kinds of faulty dialogue. --*Jane Steinberg*

From Library Journal

Novice and amateur writers alike will benefit from literary agent Lukeman's lucid advice in this handy, inexpensive little book. Lukeman draws on his years of editorial experience to present an inside look at manuscript submission. He provides suggestions, examples, and practice exercises designed to lift ordinary prose to a higher level. Covering writing fundamentals, including viewpoint, tone, pacing, character development, grammar, and more, Lukeman sprinkles examples of common writing problems and simple solutions throughout the text. Carrying the craft of writing beyond Strunk and White's classic Elements of Style, this book should find a wide audience; public libraries sponsoring writers' groups and workshops will want multiple copies. Academic libraries will want several copies to share with writing labs. Highly recommended.

-Denise S. Sticha, Seton Hill Coll., Greensburg, PA

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Review

Review from previous edition: "Intelligent, important, valuable, and entertaining instructions. . . . It should be read by all novice writers - and by those whose books are already published but intend to write more." --Richard Marek, former editorial director of Kirkus Reviews

"Mr. Lukeman has written a definitive handbook on the pitfalls to avoid in your work. . . . I highly recommend *The First Five Pages* to anyone who is serious about their writing." --PlanetShowbiz.com

"Tricks of the trade add to *The First Five Pages*' value, as do tips on grammar, style, voice and dialogue, and writing exercises. . . . A bargain when you consider all the information packed into [it]." --San Antonio Express-News

"Novice and amateur writers alike will benefit from literary agent Lukeman's lucid advice in this handy, inexpensive little book. Carrying the craft of writing beyond Strunk and White's classic Elements of Style,

this book should find a wide audience. . . . Writers' groups and workshops will want multiple copies." --
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