

What rules of etiquette should I follow to ask for blurbs from other authors?

Q: I'd like to send review copies of the children's picture book I've written and am having published to a number of popular children's book authors. I would want to ask if they'd be willing to write a "blurb" type of review, which I could have published in the book itself.

Some time ago I read (in one of those writers' e-newsletters) that one should offer payment (of a few hundred dollars – if I'm not mistaken), to each author whom they ask to write reviews for their manuscripts. Can you please tell me whether or not this is true? And, as I wouldn't want to insult or offend any of these authors by offering, or not offering to pay them, please also tell me what rules of etiquette should be followed when eliciting author reviews.

I've spoken with an author and an editor who both agree that you should not have to pay for a prepublication blurb. Their reasoning, and I agree with them, is that an author quote is assumed to have come from a person who is unbiased and is willing to recommend your book, not someone who has been paid a reader's fee to comment. I think many authors would find the offer of a payment inappropriate.

It would also be better to have the book sent by your publisher with a letter saying why they (and you) would value the author's opinion of the book and asking for permission to print their quote, if he or she does choose to provide one. If you are in a situation where you need to do all or most of the marketing and promotion for your book, then you can try making the request to the author directly. 11:12/03