Beta Reading Worksheet

Whether you’re beta reading for someone else or asking others to beta read for you, feel free to use this worksheet to organize your thoughts or questions. I gathered these ideas from numerous sources, from contest judging worksheets to my own processes. I hope you find this helpful!

If you have suggestions for points to add, please let me know via [my Contact Form](http://jamigold.com/contact/). Thanks!  
Jami

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[Jami Gold, Paranormal Author](http://jamigold.com) (Get this list at <http://jamigold.com/beta> & [learn more here](http://jamigold.com/tag/beta-reading-and-critiquing/)!)

**HOW TO USE: These questions can be thought triggers, discussion prompts, answered with a 1-5 score, etc. Use however works best for you. You *don’t* need to answer every one.**

**Opening Scene:**

* Does the story begin with an interesting hook, creating a desire to read more?
* Does the manuscript begin in the right place?

**Characterization & Motivation:**

* Are the characters compelling, sympathetic, or someone you can root for?
* Do the characters feel real and three-dimensional, with distinct voices, flaws, and virtues?
* Are their goals clear and proactive enough to influence the plot (not passive)?
* Do their motivations seem believable, with well-drawn and appropriate emotion?
* Are the secondary characters well-rounded and enhance the story rather than overwhelming the story or seeming like they should be cut?
* Are the relationships between the characters believable and not contrived?

**Plot & Conflict:**

* Are the internal and external conflicts well defined for each main character?
* Are the internal and external conflicts organic and believable, i.e. arising out of characterization and circumstance rather than feeling contrived or forced?
* Are there enough stakes and/or tension throughout to make it a “page turner”?
* Does the premise avoid cliché and/or bring a fresh perspective to an old idea?
* Are the plot twists believable yet unexpected?
* Do the characters act or react to events in a plausible, realistic, or believable way?

**Pacing:**

* Do scenes progress in a realistic, compelling manner and flow with effective transitions?
* Does every scene add to and seem important to the story?
* Does the story move along at an appropriate pace, without rushing or dragging?
* Is there a hook at the end of each chapter or scene that makes you want to read more?
* Is the story free from information dumps or backstory that slow the pace of the story?

**Setting & Worldbuilding:**

* Are descriptions vivid and give a clear sense of time and place?
* Do the details enhance rather than distract from the story?

**Dialogue:**

* Is the dialogue natural and appropriate for the story, not stilted or overly narrative?
* Does dialogue move the story forward and reveal the characters?
* Are characters’ voices consistent and distinct from one another?
* Is there an appropriate mix of dialogue and narrative?

**Craft:**

* Does the writing “show” the scene with the senses, using “telling” only as appropriate?
* Does the writing quality allow the story to shine through and draw the reader in, or are flaws jarring or intrusive?
* Is the tone appropriate and consistent for the story?
* Is the point of view (and any changes) handled appropriately and consistently?

**Overall Impression:**

* Is the voice unique, fresh, or interesting?
* Does the story deliver on the promise of its premise and opening scenes?
* From a reader’s point of view, did you enjoy reading this story?

**Additional Questions for Comment:**

* Are there any confusing sections that should be made clearer? (Mark in the manuscript)
* Do any sections take you out of the story? (Mark in the manuscript)
* Is the story a good fit for the stated genre, and if not, why not?
* Who are your favorite—and least favorite—characters and why?
* What aspects are especially likable or unlikable about the protagonist(s)?
* What three things worked best for you?
* What three things worked least for you?