



MWSA Reviews & Awards

REVIEWER TRAINING, GUIDANCE & PROCEDURES
(2024 Season)

12/7/2023



Overview

- Vision, History, Philosophy, Ethical Guidelines
- Review Process & Procedures
 - Timeline
 - Step by Step Process
 - Communication and Reviewer Admin Webpages
 - Submitting Evaluations and Reviews
- Other Topics
 - Reviewer Conference
 - E-Book Procedures
 - Benefits of Reviewing



Review & Awards Program: Vision

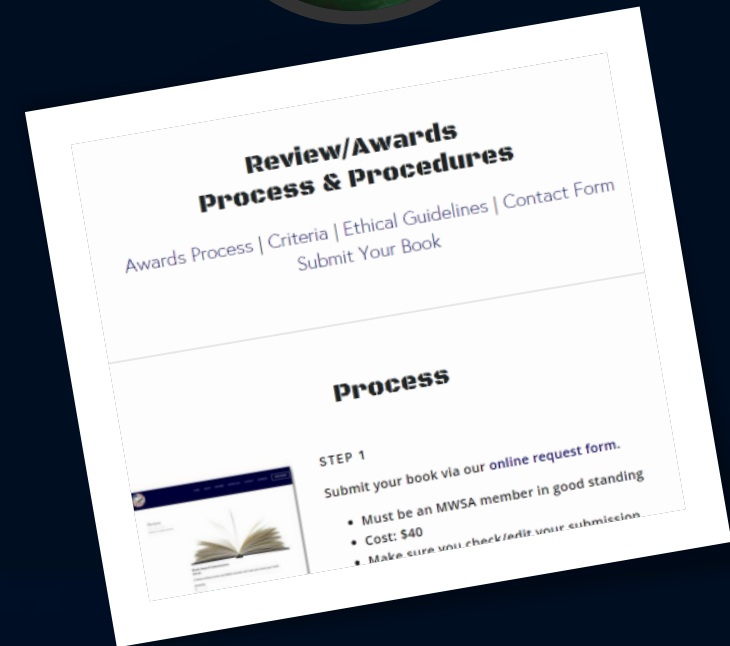
- Credible
- Consistent
- Sustainable
- Visible & Worthwhile
 - To Members, Volunteers, Public





Review & Awards Program: History

- MWSA was founded in 2006 by Bill McDonald as a vehicle for military veterans to deal with PTSD, writing as therapy.
- Over the years, the focus evolved to educating authors and awarding medals for excellence in military genres.
- The mission expanded to include additional genres to recognize excellence among members, and in 2010 a scoring system was codified.
- In 2015 the review system was restructured to use 3 reviewers for each book.
 - Volunteer reviewers have diverse backgrounds, expertise, skills.
 - A book may have 20 misspellings, but one reviewer may miss 15 of them.
- The scoring system was automated in 2018 using online forms.
- Scoring forms and genre definitions were updated in 2023.





Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 1

- Authors work hard to bring a book into being, and while it is our job to award medals for excellence, it is not our job to demean or belittle works that do not meet publishing standards or our specific criteria.
- All entries receive a review, even though all do not receive a medal.
- We write reviews for public consumption and offer private comments to authors for critique.
 - Marketing vs. Critical reviews: we're reluctant to slam fellow members' books, so our reviews *tend* towards the marketing side.
 - Comments are offered in a separate area to allow authors to get helpful feedback that is not shared with the public.

Ethical Guidelines

Ethical Guidelines for MWSA Review/Award Process These guidelines are to insure that MWSA reviews are standard, consistent, fair, and professional.

- All authors will receive the same consideration and be held to the same standards regardless of method of publication.
- A book will go through the review/award process only once, regardless of year published or format (hardcover, soft cover, ebook). Subsequent editions will not be reviewed again (though new cover art may be submitted for display on the website). The only exception is when a book changes genre that will significantly impact the judging criteria—such as audio book or teleplay or screenplay.



Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 2

Scoring Philosophy

- Books are judged against a standard, not each other
 - The program is not a competition with the 3 top-scoring books “winning” a medal.
 - All books that meet criteria for a medal receive a medal.
- Objective versus subjective scoring
 - Specific standards and guidelines are used.
 - It’s not about “how you feel” about the book.
 - Each Genre/Subcategory has its own evaluation criteria.





Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 3

Scoring Philosophy—Who?

- We use three reviewers per Book (#1, #2, #3).
 - All three read the book and evaluate based on our criteria.
 - Only the #1 Reviewer provides the official MWSA written review.

Scoring Philosophy—How?

- Answer 21 multiple-choice questions using our online form.
 - Five questions in each evaluation area: **Content, Style, Visual, Technical.**
 - Technical score has override power—great story, but too many errors = no medal.
 - Comments in each area **justify the score.**
- Final/Overall Comments are shared with the author. Eyes-Only comments go only to the Awards Directors.





Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 4

Reviewer Workload Expectation—How Many Books & How Long for Evaluation?

- We're all volunteers—score as many as you can (*even three books per season helps*).
- Average turn-around time is two weeks; 30 days should be enough time.
 - Only sign up for as many books as you can complete in one month.
 - Take additional books as you are able.
- We only review during the season's window.
 - January 2 to June 1: books arrive.
 - Reading/Evaluating completed by end of July.





Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 5

What types of books do we review?

- Books from dues-paying members only
- Review Genres/Subcategories
 - Not restricted to military-related themes
 - Includes genres for which we have criteria on website
- Method of publication
 - Self published or big publishing house (same standards)
 - Print or e-book allowed
 - Must be **published** within past five years
 - No manuscripts, PDFs, pre-publication, or Advance Reader Copies

Review & Award Genres & Subcategories

Fiction—Historical Fiction
Fiction—Literary Fiction
Fiction—Mystery/Thriller
Fiction—Horror/Fantasy/Sci Fi
Fiction—Romance

Nonfiction—History
Nonfiction—Memoir/Biography
Nonfiction—Reference
Nonfiction—How to/Business

Children & Young Adult—Picture Book
Children & Young Adult—Children's
Chapter Book
Children & Young Adult—Young Adult
(fiction or non-fiction)

Collections—Anthology
Collections—Creative Nonfiction
Collections—Humor
Collections—Religious/Spiritual

Poetry—Single Poem
Poetry—Poetry Book

Artistic—Photo Book
Artistic—Pictorial/Coffee Table
Artistic—Graphical Novel/Comic Book

Artistic-Drama—Movie
Artistic-Drama—Documentary
Artistic-Drama—Play

Music—Classical
Music—Folk/Country

Music—Rock

Music—Folk/Country

Music—Classical

Artistic-Drama—Play

Artistic-Drama—Documentary

Artistic-Drama—Movie

Artistic—Pictorial/Coffee Table

Artistic—Graphical Novel/Comic Book



“

Genres/subcategories available for review tend to change every season or two.

If your book doesn't fit neatly—or at all—into one of the ones mentioned on this page, please contact our Awards Director.

Remember, although we're the MILITARY Writers Society of America, we do not limit ourselves to books dealing with the military!



Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 6

Unacceptable Books

- X-rated, bash US or US military
- Copyright/Plagiarism Problems

How we handle them

- No score, review, or online MWSA listing
- Refund at the discretion of the Awards Directors

If in doubt, ask the Awards Directors!

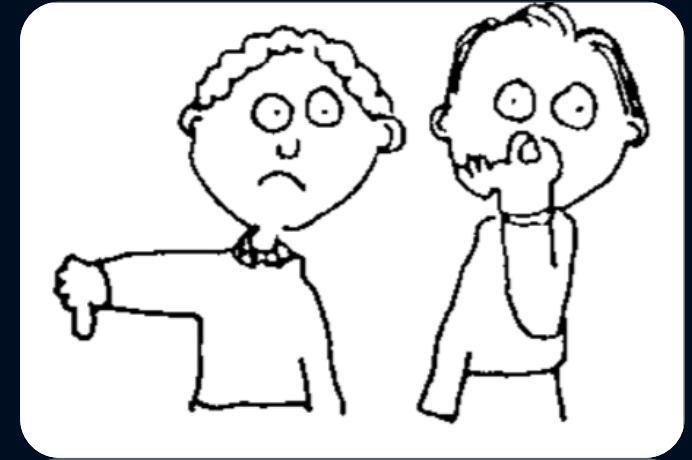




Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 7

Low-Scoring Books

- Low score \neq scathing review!
 - Submit a short review more like a synopsis
- To maintain MWSA credibility, review **must** mention shortfalls
 - Diplomatic mention of shortfalls in review or apply our Low-Score boilerplate warning
- Awards Directors will contact author and offer...
 - 1) No review or
 - 2) Honest (*potentially* unhelpful) review



MWSA's evaluation of this book found a number of technical problems—including some combination of misspellings, grammar, punctuation, or capitalization errors—which indicate that further editing would lead to a much-improved final product.



Review & Awards Program: Philosophy 8

Do you have to read every page of a bad book?

- Every season, MWSA receives “not-ready-for-primetime” books
 - The book has many problems that a professional editor would find and fix
 - MWSA must justify our evaluations and provide feedback to the author
- Once you’ve read **and documented** enough problems to justify your scoring, you may skim to the end of the book.
 - It is NOT acceptable to provide a comment like “This book needs major editing” or “This book is filled with errors” and then stop reading it.
 - If you’ve found 50 typos, punctuation, grammatical errors in the first 30-50 pages:
 - Fill out your scoring form and use the comments sections to document errors found in the first XX pages (minimum 30 pages).
 - Be prepared to justify your evaluation during a reviewer conference with the other two reviewers.





Review & Awards Program: Ethical Guidelines 1

- Authors only get one review per book (none for subsequent editions). The awards program is not a beta reader or editing service.
- No contact is allowed between authors and reviewers.
 - If an author initiates contact, the book disqualified from award consideration.
 - If the reviewer initiates contact, it's the end of the reviewer's service.
- Reviewers are not permitted to negotiate scores or their written review with authors, publicists, or publishers.
- Reviewers must follow our grading criteria...even when they'd rather not.
 - Grading higher or lower because you like or dislike the book isn't allowed.
 - The question is: Does the book meet the standards, **NOT** Did you like the book?



Content 3. Setting and Plot. The book's... *

1. Setting is well drawn, and the story/plot/arc is solid and believable, with no holes or inaccuracies (e.g. medical, legal, or time-frame issues). All the pieces fit together.
2. Setting is fairly well drawn, but the story/plot/arc may have a few small holes, inconsistencies, or inaccuracies, although everything holds together fairly well.
3. Setting is fairly well-drawn, but the story/plot/arc has enough holes, inconsistencies, or inaccuracies that the reader may become distracted.
4. Setting is poorly drawn OR the story/plot/arc has enough holes, inconsistencies, or inaccuracies to distract the reader too frequently to enjoy it.
5. Overall effect was a confusing, unsatisfactory, and/or unbelievable read.

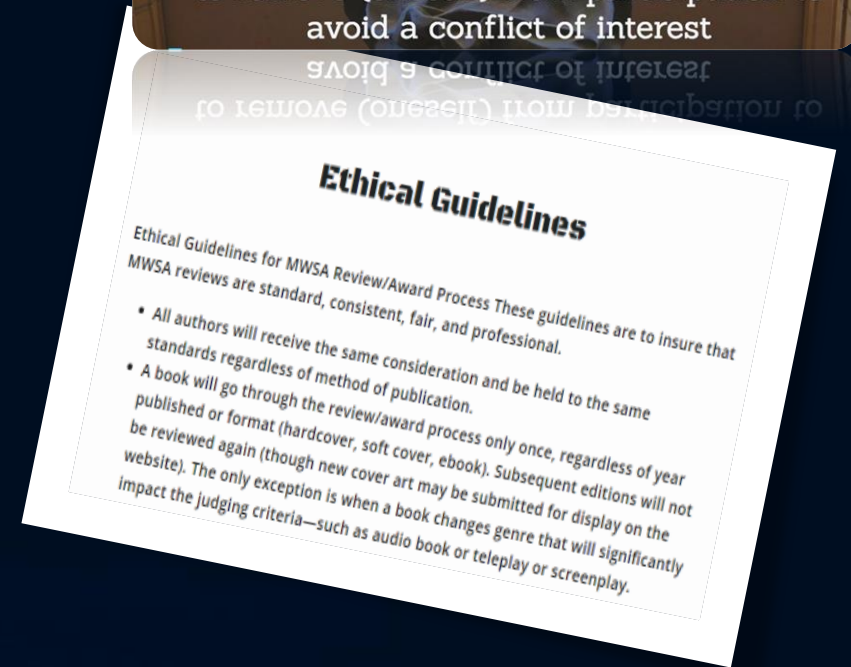
	1	2	3	4	5	
Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bad



Review & Awards Program: Ethical Guidelines 2

- Reviewer Recusal: do not sign up to review:
 - A family member or close associate's work.
 - A book in same Genre/Subcategory as one you are submitting in the same year.
 - A book in which you have an emotional connection to the subject area that may impact your objectivity.
 - **When in doubt, recuse yourself.**
- Role of Awards Directors
 - Track books, scores, reviews
 - Train reviewers
 - Arbitrate final score/award among reviewers
 - Communicate with reviewers and authors

More Details & Guidelines on Reviewer Admin section of website





Review Process & Procedures

WHEN AND HOW WE GET THINGS DONE



Review/Awards Timeline

Calendar Milestones & Goals

- January 2 to June 1: Submission window is open for new books.
- June 15: All books assigned to reviewers
- July 30: Awards finalists are announced
- September to November: Medal winners announced at annual conference awards banquet

We only review for six months per year! 😊





Review/Awards Process

Step 1 Authors Submit Books

- On or after January 2
- Data entered
- Web page created online
- Tracking starts



Step 2 Reviewers Request Books

- Check Reviewers' webpage
- Get details
- Pick what you want
- Submit preferences



Step 3 Books Assigned

- Reviewers assigned (1st come, 1st served)
- #1 Reviewer writes review
- When 3 reviewers sign up, we send 2 emails:
 - Tell author to Send books
 - Tell reviewers that books are on the way



Review/Awards Process (*Continued*)

Step 4 Read & Score

- Reviewers tell us Book/eBook arrived
- Read, score, and review book within a month via online form



Step 5 When all scores are in

- If scores are divergent directors initiate an online conference
- Review posted on MWSA website



Step 6 Lather, rinse, repeat!

- Pick your next book!
- Read and score.
- Continue until season ends in June.
- Finalists announced
- Medals awarded



How We Communicate & Reviewer Admin Pages

CONSISTENT FORM-DRIVEN COMMUNICATIONS



Form-Driven Communications

Website Info & Forms

- We have info and forms for: Books available for review, Reviewers' preference, Receipt of book, Scoring & Review, Reviewer Conference.
- Convenient for reviewers *and* provides more timely service to our authors

What/How Often

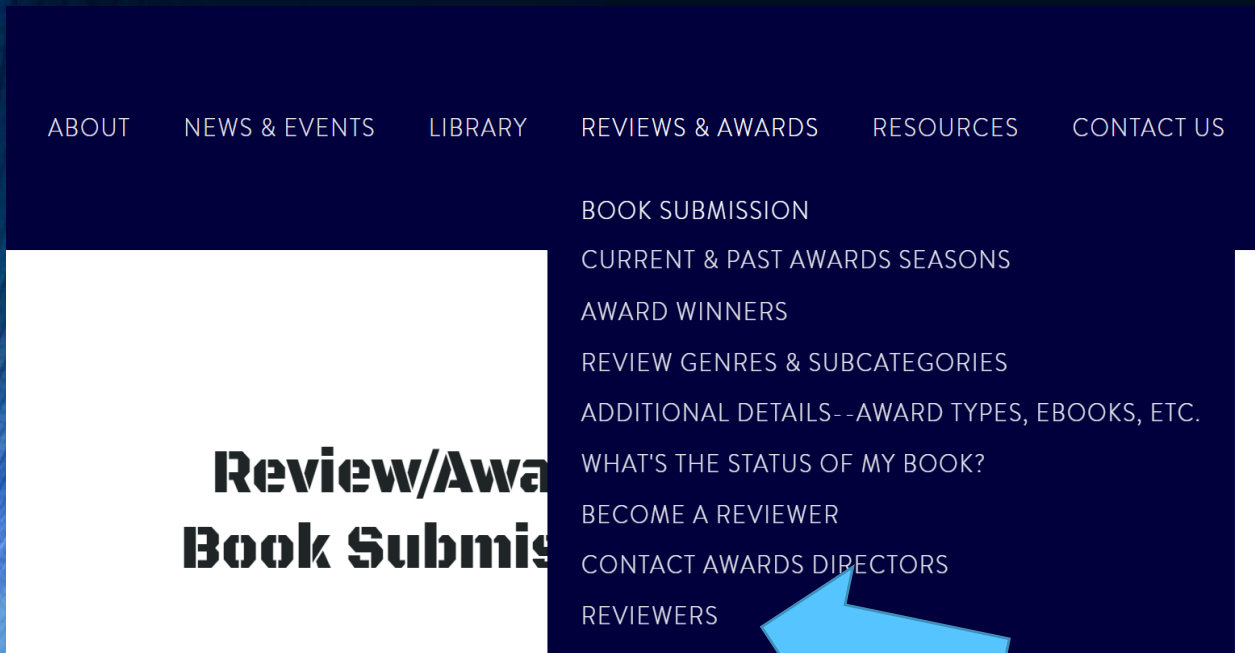
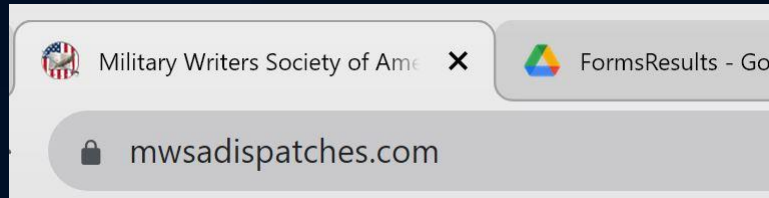
- Website is available 24/7
- Reviewer Update emails
 - Sent periodically by Awards Directors throughout season
 - Includes available books and reviewer news



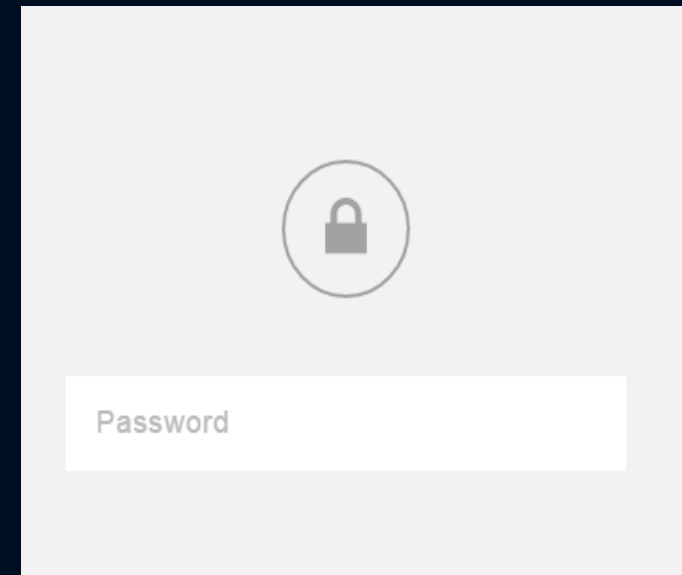


Reviewers Webpage 1

WHERE: MAIN WEBSITE
REVIEWERS (PRIVATE)



PASSWORD-PROTECTED



Password provided after training completion



Reviewers Webpage 2

NAVIGATION BAR (BOOKS & MAIN)

Navigate to different Reviewer Admin pages

Browse & Pick Books

Update...
• Contact Info
• Format preference (e-Book/Paper)

Let us know you received a review copy (paper or Kindle)

Up-to-date status of all books

The screenshot shows the MWSA Reviewer Main Page. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with links: ABOUT, NEWS & EVENTS, LIBRARY, NEWS & AWARDS, and RE. Below the navigation bar is a white sidebar on the left titled "Reviewer Admin" containing a list of links: REVIEWERS, TRAINING & PROCEDURES, SCORING FORMS, EVALUATION DETAILS, REVIEWER CONFERENCE, WRITING A REVIEW EMAILS, OUTSIDE REVIEWS, KINDLE REVIEWING TRICKS, EVALUATING EBOOKS, REVIEWER CHAT, VIDEO GUIDANCE, and REVIEWER POLL RESULTS. The main content area is titled "MWSA Reviewer Main Page" and has a dark blue header with tabs: Books, Reviews, Rules/Training, and Preferences. The "Books" tab is active, showing a list of options: "Books available to review", "Sign up to review book(s)", "I got my book (via mail or email)", "Book Details & Assignments", and "How to find books on website...". Below this is a section titled "Books to Review" with a sub-header "Please select a book and submit your preferences". At the bottom of the page, there is a note: "The #1 reviewer (#1 slot) does the written review for the website. As always, please select books at the top of the list first (the ones submitted first) whenever possible."



Reviewers Webpage 3

NAVIGATION BAR (REVIEWS)

MWSA Reviewer Main Page

Books **Reviews** **Rules/Training** **Preferences**

- Online Review Forms
 - Fiction
 - Nonfiction
 - Children & Young Adult
 - Poetry
 - Other Genres
 - Artistic
- Add Comments or Review (after form submitted)
- Reviewer Conference
- Review-writing Guidance

Submit Scores, Comments, and Review via online forms

Detailed instructions and submission form for all types of reviewer conferences

Submit comments and/or review separately

How to write MWSA review



Reviewers Webpage 4

SEE WHAT'S AVAILABLE

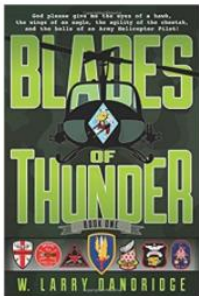
Books to Review

See what's available to review

Scroll down for spreadsheet to see what review slots are open

Click here to scroll through the entire list of available books (with all details)...

PLEASE PICK FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST--THEY'RE THE BOOKS WE'VE HAD THE LONGEST (WITHOUT REVIEWERS).



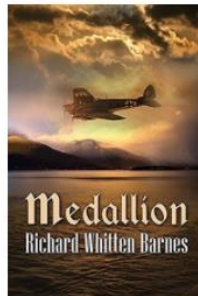
Read More →

Apr 19, 2018 ·
2018 Season, MWSA
Review Pending,
History



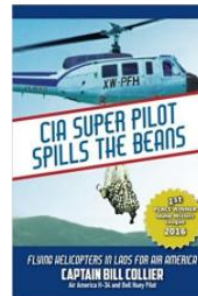
Read More →

Apr 12, 2018 ·
2018 Season, MWSA
Review Pending,
History



Read More →

Apr 11, 2018 ·
2018 Season, MWSA
Review Pending,
Historical Fiction



Read More →

Apr 9, 2018 ·
2018 Season, MWSA
Review Pending,
Memoir/Biography



Read More →

Apr 7, 2018 ·
2018 Season, MWSA
Review Pending,
Memoir/Biography

Click on Cover or "Read More" for book details page...

Or use spreadsheet on same page (shows open/filled review slots)

Please choose the books waiting the longest for three reviewers!

Books to Review Spreadsheet

Remember, the #1 reviewer (#1 slot) does the written review for the website

2018 Books in contention: 45, Finished: 24 (53.3%). We have 17 open review slots and are awaiting 29 scores.

Book #	Title (click to open book page)	Genre	Format	Review Slots #1 / #2 / #3	Days Waiting
38	From Student to Warrior -- A	History	Paper only	Filled / OPEN / OPEN	22
39	Settling Up	Mystery/Thriller	Paper or eBook	OPEN / Filled / OPEN	21
41	The Adventures of a Helicopter	Memoir/Biography	Paper only	OPEN / OPEN / OPEN	15
42	CIA Super Pilot Spills the Beans	Memoir/Biography	Paper only	OPEN / OPEN / OPEN	14
43	Medallion	Historical Fiction	Paper or eBook	OPEN / Filled / OPEN	11
44	Raiding the Empire of the Sun	History	Paper or eBook	Filled / OPEN / OPEN	10
45	Blades of Thunder	History	Paper only	OPEN / OPEN / OPEN	3



Reviewers Webpage 5

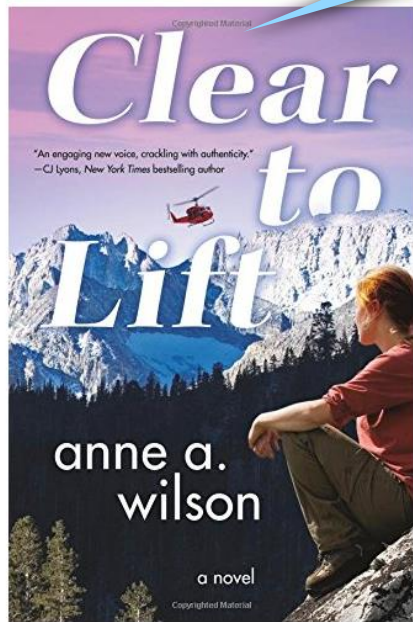
BOOK DETAILS PAGE

Clear To Lift; by Anne A. Wilson

MWSA Review

Clear to Lift by Anne Wilson can best be described as an action novel with a side of romance. From the first page to the last we are swept into the world of search and rescue in the mountains of Nevada. Alison Malone, recently stationed at Naval Air Station Fallon, feels that her career in the Navy has stagnated. Desperate to get her career back on track, she resolutely pushes for a transfer away from a duty station she considers to be a step in the wrong direction. But as she learns new skills and builds relationships within both the military and civilian communities, her resolve wavers. And her desire to be stationed near her corporate-investor fiancé in San Diego begins to crumble.

Clear to Lift follows in the footsteps of



Once you're on a book detail page, click on the book cover to go to Amazon listing in a new browser window.

Check Genre, Format (Paper/E-Book), Genre, Number of Pages, and Word Count on book detail page...
Don't pick it if you don't want it or it's in the wrong format!

After checking out the book details, use your browser's Back Button to return to reviewers' page

ISBN/ASIN: 978-0765378514
Book Format(s): Hard cover
Genre(s): Fiction, Literary Fiction
Number of Pages: 320



Reviewers Webpage 6

ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT'S AVAILABLE, TELL US
WHAT **BOOK(S)** YOU WANT

- First come, first served
- Instructions at top of form
- Enter Book Choice & Reviewer Slot
 - Write Review (#1) or Score Only (#2 & #3)
- Preference for up to three books
 - How many books you'll take at one time
- Use Notes if necessary

Reviewer name

Enter up to three review book choices and desired review slot.

Let us know if you'll take more than one book at a time with the "How Many?" Selection.

Review Book Preference
Tell us which book(s) you want to review

- Requests will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis
- First three questions--Reviewer Name, Review Book Choice, and preferred reviewer slot--are required entries. Everything else can be left blank.
- If you're willing to accept being assigned to more than one book at a time, please let us know by selecting 1, 2, or 3 in the "How Many?" question.

Reviewer *
Reviewer Name

1st Choice *
Book # (if known), Title (Required)

1st Choice Reviewer Slot *
Please enter your preferred review slot for your first book choice above.
#1--Write Review and Score
#2 or 3--Score Only
Any--Any Open Slot (note: if it's open, you'll get the review slot)

2nd Choice
Book#, Title

2nd Reviewer Slot

3rd Choice

3rd Reviewer Slot

How Many?
How many of the above choices will you take at one time?

Notes
You can use this block for additional information.

Thanks!

SUBMIT



Reviewers Webpage 7

YOUR FORMAT PREFERENCE LETS AUTHORS
KNOW WHAT TO SEND

You'll get a **Reviewer Notification** email when we send the author a request to send books. It will include your Book.Reviewer# as well as the correct genre for scoring. **Keep this email handy for future reference.**

If you only accept Kindle format copies for review, the author will email us the Kindle and we will forward it to you (i.e., we don't need your address).

- Paper and Kindle
- Paper Only
- Kindle Only

If you accept paper copies for review, the author needs your **correct** address!

MWSA Reviewer 1
- Prefers paper
126 Military Writers Circle
Anytown, PA 80704

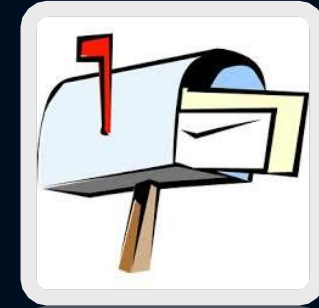
MWSA Reviewer 2
- Paper only
123 Reviewer St
Reviewer, NM 12345

MWSA Reviewer 3
- Prefers Kindle



Reviewers Webpage 8

TELL US WHEN YOUR BOOK ARRIVES!



- **Book.Reviewer# is vital!**
 - Books are numbered as they come in, and review slots are limited to 1, 2, or 3. The Book.Reviewer# is the book number and the reviewer slot, separated by a period (e.g., 78.2 means 78 is the number assigned to the book and 2 is the #2 reviewer). All online forms use that assigned number. Make sure you copy it exactly from your notification email.
 - Reviewer Name & Title are needed in case you enter the wrong Book.Reviewer#
- This form helps us avoid “Lost in Space” review books
- **Awards Director will bug you if you neglect to fill in the book receipt. 😊**

Review Book Receipt
Let us know you got a review copy

Please let us know when you get your review copy (paper or e-book). This allows us to keep track of our progress and better serve our MWSA authors.

Only the Book.Reviewer Number is required!
so please make sure you've got it right :-)

Book.Reviewer # *
Book Number followed by review position
Reviewer (#1 slot) of Book 12 = 12.1

Reviewer Name

Title
Just enough to crosscheck Book #

Date Received
mm/dd
You can leave blank if you received book today

Comments and/or questions

SUBMIT



Reviewer Notification Email

When & What

- Sent when we get three reviewers for a book
- Lets you know your review copy will be on the way shortly
- Includes:
 - All reviewers' names and Book.Reviewer#
 - Book Title
 - Scoring Genre/Category (*tells you which evaluation form to use*)
 - **Important Instructions with links to the Book Receipt form and the Scoring form**



Reviewer 1: Babe Ruth / Book.Reviewer#: 2.1
Reviewer 2: Daffy Duck / Book.Reviewer#: 2.2
Reviewer 3: Tuff Grader / Book.Reviewer#: 2.3

Dear Reviewers of Book # 2, How I Visited Mars on Vacation
Scoring Category: __ Memoir/Biography __

- WHEN YOUR BOOK ARRIVES, it is your responsibility to let us know when it arrives.
Do not email the Awards Directors. Please note your individual review copy.

- WHEN YOU FINISH READING, score online using the proper category.
Do not discuss your scoring with another reviewer. To be fair to the author and to

- IF A BOOK IS CAUSING YOU PROBLEMS (wrong genre selected, etc.)
Please email the Awards Directors know immediately.

Thanks!

Reviewers are not permitted to discuss or modify their individual scoring until and unless the Awards Directors convene a Reviewer Conference!



Book Scoring & Reviews

USE ONLINE SCORING FORMS



Book Scoring 1

Step 1. Select Appropriate Form

- Scoring category is always shown in book details.
 - Authors must choose one review subcategory (which determines evaluation criteria) when first submitting the book.
 - Contact Awards Directors if you think the wrong genre/subcategory was selected (e.g., Is the book History or Historical Fiction?).
- Scoring forms are located on reviewers' page
 - Genre-specific Forms (Fiction, Non-Fiction, etc.)
 - Subcategory selection on first page of scoresheet (Horror/Sci-Fi, Romance, etc.)
- Fill in your name, email, Book.Reviewer#, title, and subcategory

Genre: Fiction

Included Subcategories:

- Historical Fiction
- Literary Fiction
- Mystery/Thriller
- Horror/SciFi
- Romance

[Scroll down for more Genres/Subcategories](#)

FICTION REVIEW FORM

Fiction

Fiction Scoresheet

-Genre/Subcategory
We use the genre submitted by author. If in doubt as to whether the book is in the correct Genre/Subcategory, go ahead and complete this review/scoring... but please contact Awards Directors!

-Email
We're asking for your email address so that you can get feedback. Once you submit your review, a copy of what you sent will be emailed back to you within a minute or two.
November 2018

*** Required**

Email address *
Your email

Book.Reviewer # *
Book Number and Reviewer Slot Number (separated by a decimal point). Third Reviewer doing Book # 1 = 1.3, First Reviewer doing book #15 = 15.1. This number is on your reviewer coordination message and your reviewer summary.
Your answer

Reviewer Name *
Your answer

Title *
Doesn't have to be exact, just a crosscheck of the Book.Reviewer number above.
Your answer

Subcategory *

- Historical Fiction
- Literary Fiction
- Mystery/Thriller
- Horror/Sci-Fi
- Romance

NEXT



Book Scoring 2

Step 2. Answer 21 questions, submit comments

- Four Sections—**Content, Style, Visual, Technical**—with 5 questions in each section
 - Must answer all questions before advancing to next page
 - After answering the questions in each section, **add comments** to justify and explain your scores for that section.
- Section Comments
 - Except for Eyes-Only section, all comments are shared with the author at the end of the season.
 - Be diplomatic with critiques—what you'd want to read about *your* book's good qualities or shortfalls
 - Limited Formatting available in Google Forms
 - No Bold or Italics
 - Use "Enter" key to add blank lines between paragraphs

Literary Fiction Content

Literary fiction is character driven rather than plot driven and explores themes about what it means to be human. It doesn't necessarily display a story arc or have a predictable tidy ending. However, the reader is left with lingering reflections on, and questions about, the character. Most literary fiction is contemporary. The prose may exhibit artistic flare or be simple but meaningful. (70,000 to 100,000 words)

Content 1. Appeal/Entertain/Value. The book... *

1. Is a captivating and thought-provoking exploration of an internal response to an external struggle of the human condition. It is fully credible, entertaining, and valuable, incorporating a strong character, exploration of the human condition, and a lingering ending.
2. Develops a character's struggle with a life event, but the story leaves the reader with a nagging sense that something is missing. It is mostly credible, entertaining, and valuable.
3. Is an interesting story but mundane in the telling. It is somewhat credible, entertaining, and valuable.
4. Lacks the elements of literary fiction: a strong character, exploration of the human condition, and a lingering ending.
5. Rambles around a theme, but the story lacks conflict and meaning.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bad



Book Scoring 2(cont.)

Step 2. Answer 21 Questions (cont.)

- If you can't find appropriate **answer** among those provided on the scoresheet, pick the closest:
 - Answer or Score number
 - Explain what you did and why in the Section Comments block
- If you have a problem not addressed in a specific **question**, pick the closest question:
 - Score it with closest/most appropriate # score
 - Explain what you did in comments section
- If the book has major problems not addressed in our scoresheet, contact the Awards Directors

EXAMPLE COMMENT

Author put too much detail in scene-setting. For example, on page 347, the reader didn't need to know: "65 degrees Fahrenheit (or 18.333 degrees Celsius), which was much warmer than normal low temperature for the month of April (i.e. 37 degrees Fahrenheit/2.77778 degrees Celsius)."

Content 3. Setting/Story/Theme. The book... *

1. Has a realistic setting for this character-driven narrative. The storyline is satisfying, even though it may not have an arc or tidy ending. Rather, the reader is left with more questions. Theme development is good and the conflict has depth.
2. Has a setting that is fairly well drawn, and/or the story/plot/arc may have a few small holes or inconsistencies. However, everything holds together well. Theme development is fairly good and the conflict has depth.
3. Has a setting that is fairly well drawn, but the story/plot/theme has enough holes or inconsistencies that the reader is distracted. Theme development starts off well, but the conflict lacks depth.
4. Has a setting that is poorly drawn, OR the story/plot/theme has enough holes/inconsistencies to distract the reader too frequently to enjoy it. Theme development is poor OR the conflict is minimal.
5. Is a confusing, unsatisfactory, and/or unbelievable read.

Good 1 2 3 4 5 Bad



Book Scoring 3a

Step 3a. Award Recommendation

- Is the book medal-worthy?
- Should align with your numerical scoring
- Provides a crosscheck for awards directors
- Doesn't impact your score
- Includes your opinion about whether the book...
 - * Requires a caveated (more critical) review
 - * Is suitable for our website

Award Recommendation *

1. Definitely award material
2. Probably award material
3. I'm ambivalent. Could be a low medal or no medal
4. Probably NOT award material
5. Definitely NOT award material
-
6. Caveated review required
7. Not appropriate for MWSA website

Notes

- Award recommendation does NOT impact your numerical scoring
- Your recommendation *should* match your scoring
- #6 Caveated review
 - replaces the type of review question in the reviewer conference
 - indicates that you're comfortable informing the author that the book was well below industry standards of content, style, visual, and/or technical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Award-worthy Not appropriate for MWSA website



Book Scoring 3b

Step 3b. Provide Overall Comments

- **Eyes-Only Comments** are required. These are unrestricted thoughts and comments for internal discussion.
 - You can safely vent here, knowing the author will never see what you write in this section. Let it rip...you're our quality control experts.
 - Example: "Author drove me crazy with italics, micromanaging the dialogue."
- **Author Comments** are optional if you covered flaws in section comments, but highly encouraged.
 - Use for overall comments or encouragement, but DO NOT repeat information you already wrote in the individual sections' comments.
 - Overall comments are especially important for non-medal winners.
- **Add Review** (if you are the #1 Reviewer)

Eyes-Only Comments *

Give us at least a short overview of your thoughts on scoring.

Your answer

Author Comments

Not required. Any comments, errors, etc. that you'd like to share with the author.

Your answer

Review

Only #1 Reviewer needs to provide the review.

Your answer



Book Scoring 4

4. Importance of Reviewer Comments for Author Feedback

- MWSA Primary Mission: **HELP AUTHORS**
 - Not just with their marketing efforts
 - Also with specific feedback
- Too little
 - Imagine that you're the author getting this "feedback."
 - We don't share Eyes-Only comments with authors, so this author got zero feedback.

**Actual review from
2018 Season before we
required comments for
each section...**

Content:

Style:

Visual:

Technical:

Eyes-Only: This book needs professional editing.

Author Comments:

Review: "

**Is this
helpful to
author?**



Book Scoring 4 (cont.)

4. Importance of Reviewer Comments for Author Feedback (cont.)

- Too much: We're not editing the book
 - You should document the "why" of your scoring—giving examples of errors—but don't document **all** the errors you find
 - In the tech comments, you may provide examples of spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, including page numbers if relevant. But please do not sent every instance you noted and marked while reading. *Too much* feedback veers into editing.
- Personalized Author Comments can soften the blow when there's a lot wrong.

adjective of "conflict" makes the sentence confusing. A short description of "Banana Wars" might've helped.; "In that early Marine Corps aviation..." run-on/awkward sentence. 6. "Marc, in Vietnam, was my artillery forward observer..." awkward.; "Once, near the final editing point..." awkward. 7. Inconsistent capitalization of "world war"; "One of them, First Lieutenant Christian Schilt..." Run-on sentence. 8. "Squadron" should be capitalized when associated with the squadron number.; Technically, there's no such thing as a "Congressional" Medal of Honor. 13. "Cunningham had been ordered to organize..." run-on sentence. 36. "After two months of heated debate in the Navy headquarters, the Marines are granted..." inconsistent verb tense use. 66. Chamorro[w] misspelled; "He attacked and threatening Bluefields in early August." Should be "threatened"; "A force of 100 USS Galveston Marines and sailors..." awkward; by September, the high ground separating..." run-on sentence ("," after Army). 72. Should have a comma after "According to him" 76. "For information, General Feland..." missing "your"; how did the photo depicting General Feland reviewing troops arrive so quickly? 94. Wemblán on map, Wemblán in text. 108. "Blanco returned with a telegram" comma required between telegram and which. 112. Missing a closing quotation mark after "We will depart the day after tomorrow, the eighth." 113. At times, bringing photos/images into the story seemed a bit forced. 118. "Sandino's only comment was an unbelievable, "What?" Was it unbelievable that he said "What?" Or did he not believe Irias? 124. "...restore [our] Liberal party to power." out/our and "party" should be capitalized. 125. "... let him know that most any arrangement..." if not in conversation, should be "almost" rather than "most" 149. "... 100 pound sandbag was in the front to balance the plane's center-of-gravity balance." Better to omit the second "balance?" 150. "Rowell's" 153. "consuming" liberals? 202. On the piece of paper, a comma needed between "last" and "displaying" 204. "Gracious, amigos" is this a misspelling of "gracias" or a mispronunciation? "De nada, Señor Major" Is Hernández mixing his English and Spanish by using Major instead of Mayor? 207. "At O'Shea's meeting table..." run-on sentence. 209. "outright" is one word. 222. Why is Captain Stanley Archibald infamous? 235. comma between "score" and "putting" 239. "The youth was while pointing to the stock of a rifle..." adding commas after "was" and "rifle" might help... but sentence would still be awkward. 240. "ten-man" in conversation, hyphenate "malaria free", missing closed quote after "... touch of malaria." 241. "But trails always provided first clues as to where they may be." Mixed tenses, "might" be? 242. "Not sure, Lieutenant?" why question mark? 245. Missing closed quote after "...the plane brought this message." 249-250. "... convinced O'Shea that the bandits had possessed plenty of ammunition." mixed tenses. 251. "... in trace of" never seen this phrase used before. 260. "... now that Colonel Gulick has the brigade they are requesting..." comma after brigade., "Looking around the room..." awkward., "Well, Sir, that just wouldn't happen." ; he/she is getting the Affairs" (accent and caps, as ore behind the plane then

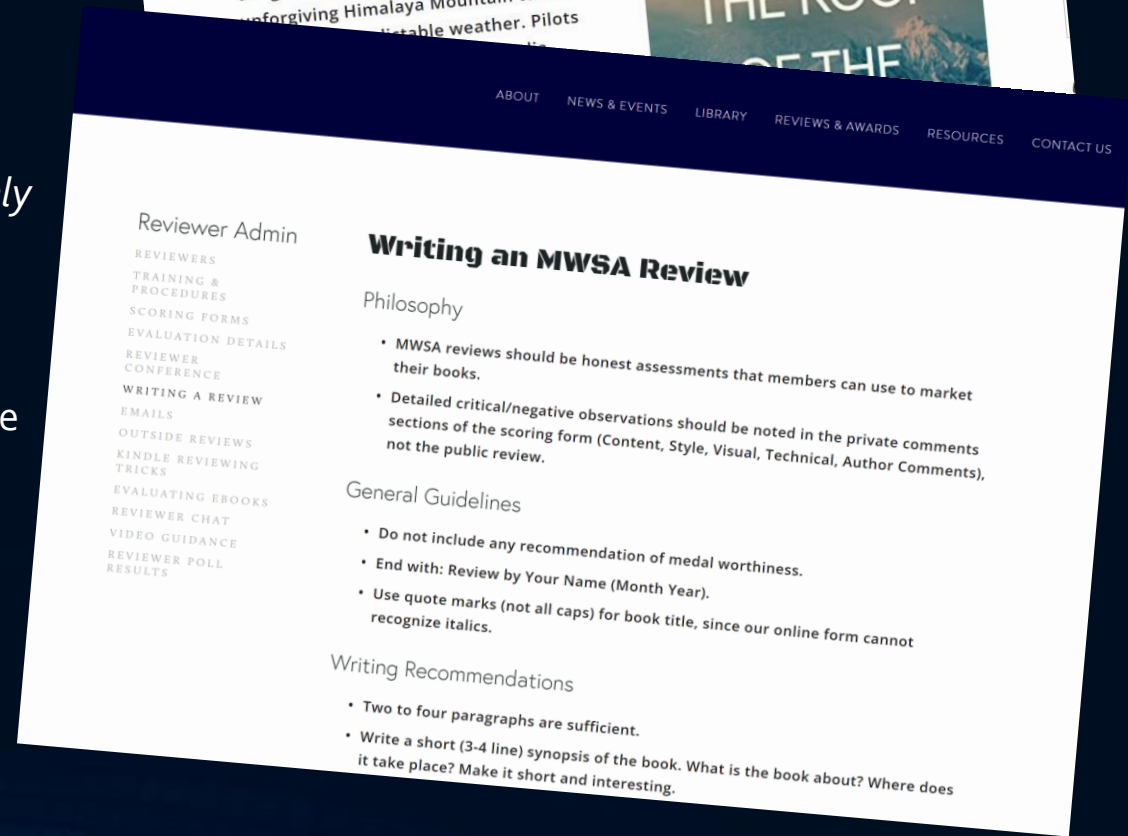
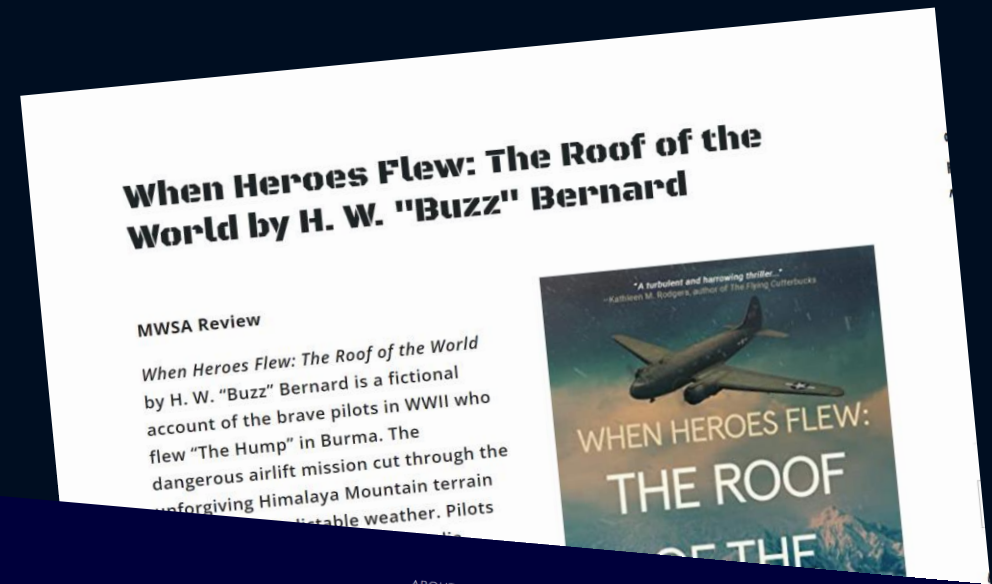
Author Comments: From a professional standpoint, please consider using the services of a professional editor or proof reader, as that may improve the overall presentation, but well done.

On a more personal note, thanks for the time you took to honor your brother. As I read your book, being a service academy graduate myself (USNA'94) I was struck by the similarities between yours and Ray's experiences as cadets and mine as a midshipman. A sincere thank you to you and your family for your service and sacrifice.



MWSA Reviews

- Who?
 - It's the #1 Reviewer's work, but we provide formatting and light editing for punctuation, spelling, etc.
- What?
 - Two to four paragraphs
 - Intended primarily for description and marketing (i.e., not *entirely* critical)
- How?
 - See WRITING A REVIEW in the Reviewers' Section of the website
 - Submit with your scoring evaluation
- Where?
 - Posted on MWSA website's book page
 - Posted on Goodreads

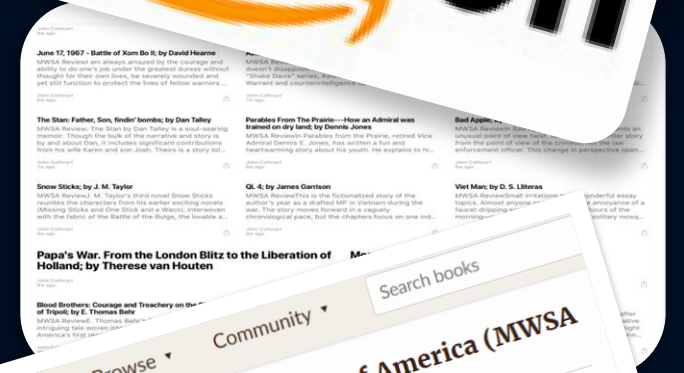




Outside Reviews

If you want to post an additional review elsewhere:

- When?
 - **AFTER awards are announced!**
- Who?
 - Anyone can write a review of a book they read
 - Same guidelines apply
- Why?
 - Wider visibility for author, reviewer, MWSA
- How? See Reviewers' Page for Details
 - Content, Attribution, Format, Signature
 - Guidance to ensure consistent product and maintain MWSA credibility
 - How to translate MWSA Medal into Stars





Other Topics

- REVIEWER CONFERENCE
- E-BOOK PROCEDURES
- REVIEWER BENEFITS

Covered briefly here but you can refer to instructions later as necessary



Reviewer Conference

Reason for Convening

- Reviewers scores diverged significantly
- Some other review problem requiring a second look

What Happens?

- Awards Directors initiate and share scores/comments among all three reviewers via email.
- After reading the other reviewers' evaluations, use our form to:
 - Modify or maintain your original scoring, providing comments to justify or explain
 - **OR** let us know you'll be submitting a NEW scoring form
- Comments are vital—and required

[Reviewer Conference Page](#)
Includes [Online Form](#) and [Detailed Instructions](#)

Reviewer Conference Scoring Form

Important Note

If you choose to leave your scores unchanged, you're indicating that you:

1. Thoroughly documented and justified your scores in your initial scoring
2. Have read all the other reviewers' scores and comments
3. Understand that MWSA reviewers don't have the option to *ignore* other reviewers' scores and comments in the technical area. You can disagree, but you have to explain your reasoning using this reviewer conference form.

Tech Score *

Keep in mind that the technical score can limit the medal a book can earn. If you marked down one tech score, the book will still be a gold tech score. If you mark down two tech questions (or marked a single question down by two notches), it will be a silver tech score. Three markdowns will result in a bronze medal. Four or more markdowns keep the book out of medal range. If you marked down more than ten notches in tech, the author will be notified, and the book must be given a caveated review.

Note: if another reviewer has accurately pointed out technical errors that you missed, you have two options:

1. Update your tech score to match what the other reviewer(s) found
2. Dispute the tech errors and defend your case

You do not have the option to ignore technical errors pointed out by another reviewer.

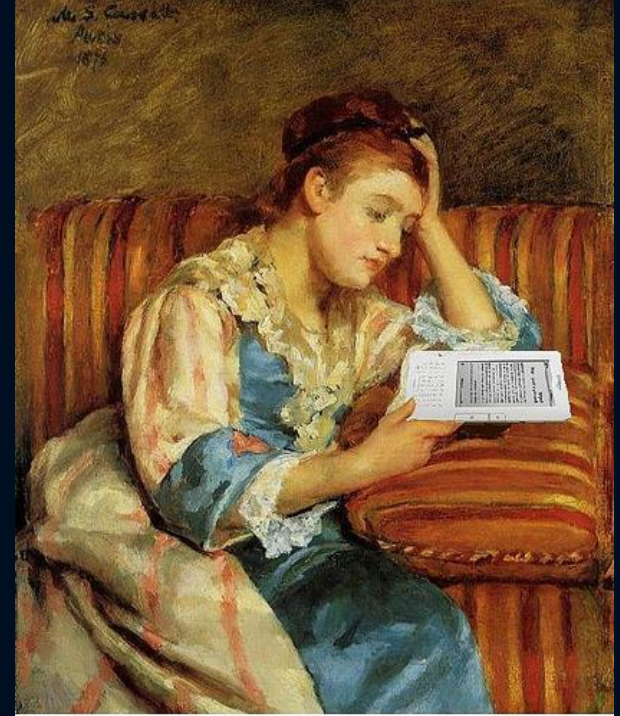
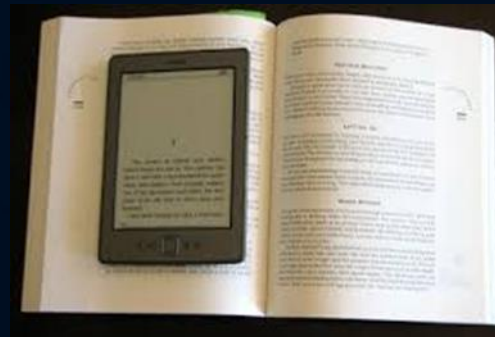
- Keep my Tech score unchanged
- Gold
- Silver
- Bronze
- No Medal
- Low-Score/No Medal–Caveated Review, immediate author notification required



E-Book Procedures 1

Restrictions & Limitations

- E-book must be published and have an ISBN or ASIN number
- PDF or word processor files **will not be accepted** for MWSA review
- Not all reviewers can accept e-books (*and that's okay*)
- Authors do not send e-books directly to MWSA reviewers
- Procedures apply to books with...
 - Both paper and e-book versions, or
 - Only e-book version(s)

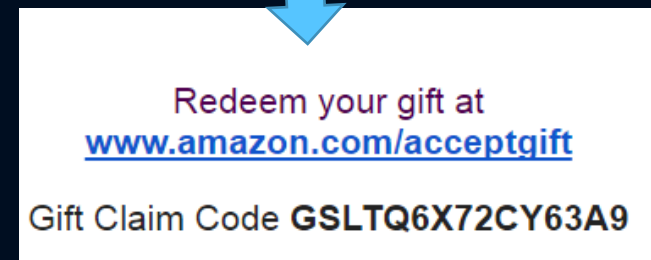
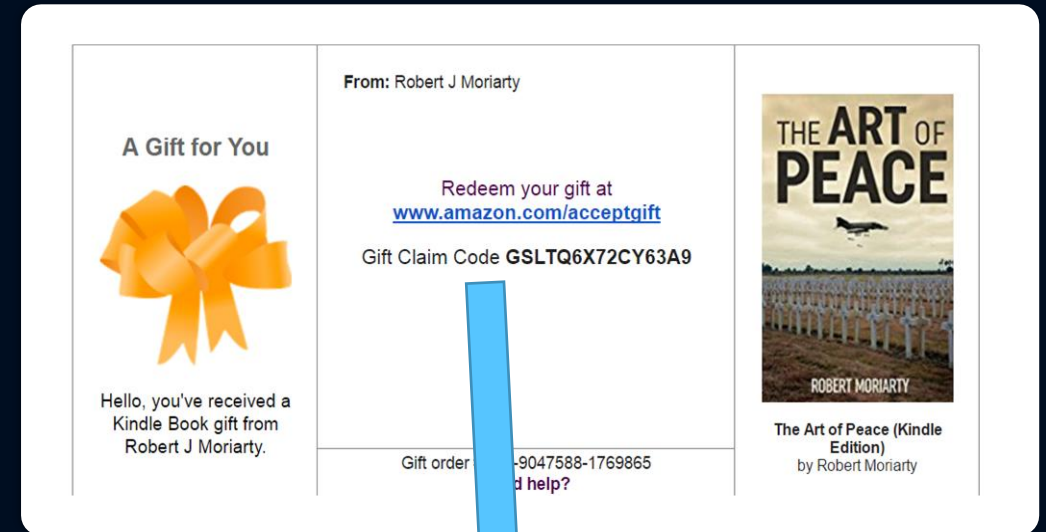




E-Book Procedures 2

How MWSA reviewers get a review e-book

- Author sends review copy (*or copies*) via Amazon Gift Claim or redemption code to the awards directors.
 - This is NOT the same as a gift coupon (which involves a specific *dollar* amount rather than a specific *book*).
 - Detailed author instructions are on our website
- Awards Directors forward the Amazon Gift Claim email(s) to the appropriate reviewers.
 - Reviewers must have an Amazon account to redeem the Kindle gift.
 - The email includes a clickable link so that reviewers can download their own review copies to their Kindle app.
 - Download the Kindle right away and check to make sure all parts are working before filling out the Book Received form.
 - This methodology avoids having to share reviewer email addresses with authors.





Benefits of MWSA Reviewing

Pay it Forward & Writer Education

- Help your fellow MWSA authors while helping *yourself* become a better writer.
 - The best continuing education for a writer is reading...lots of reading.
 - Critical reading and evaluation will help sharpen your skills as a writer.

Reviewer Recognition & Additions to Library

- Your reviews get you publicity too.
 - We post our reviews and links to additional websites and apps
 - This increases your visibility as well as author's and MWSA's—Win, Win, Win
- MWSA thanks reviewers with Amazon gift certificates.
 - To qualify, reviewers must accrue a minimum number of points.
 - Certificates are emailed after the awards banquet.
- Your review copy is yours to keep or donate (VA facility, nursing home, Goodwill).

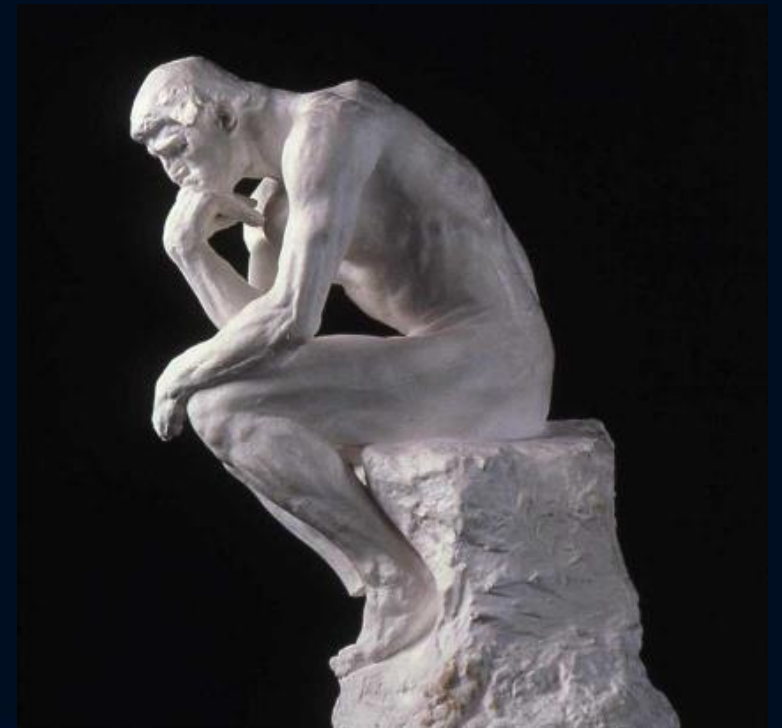




Welcome to MWSA Reviewing

Thank you for volunteering!

Please don't hesitate to ask questions or suggest ways we can improve MWSA's Reviews & Awards program. We value your opinion.





New for the 2024 Season

- Revised Scoring Forms
 - Maximum total score is now 100 points (previously 70).
 - All scoring subcategories have new questions and answers.
 - Many subcategories now have expanded explanations (with links to more detailed information)
- Streamlined Reviewer Conferences
 - We eliminated the low-score and training reviewer conferences.
 - Input on if a book needs a caveated (more critical) review is now found in the initial scoring form.
 - Reviewers choose between updating scores, keeping scores unchanged, or submitting a new scoring form.



Training Quiz

Now that you've read these slides, [take the training quiz here.](#)

If you're a new reviewer, it's required to start reviewing for us.

If you've been reviewing for years, taking the quiz allows us to document training dates automatically. It also allows you to check your address and/or format preference and make updates if required.

THANK YOU!