

How to Contact an Editor to Write a Book Review

- To begin, gather information on journals where you would like a possible review to appear. Build a list of journals in which you aspire to publish articles. Find the contact information for the editors of those journals, especially the reviews editors listed on their mastheads. These will be the people you contact. It is a distinct possibility that you will be familiar with their names and previous work. This will prove valuable in the solicitation process.

- Remember, your professional contacts will often be the best resources for finding a journal to publish a review.
 - Often, the very people you meet at conferences like SSSL will also be associated with editorial teams at journals with which you are familiar. There is nothing wrong, when you have a review in mind, with asking those individuals personally whether they would be interested in having you as a reviewer. The answer will often be affirmative, as journals are always happy to have volunteer reviewers.

- If you cannot make a personal contact, be on the lookout for calls for reviewers on sites like H-Net and the Penn CFP database.¹ Do research on specific journals in the MLA periodicals database
 - One thing to remember is that journals are almost always in need of willing reviewers. Keeping your ears to the professional ground and responding quickly to solicitations for reviewers will help. Even if there is no open call for reviewers, you should not be weary of cold calling review editors.²

- If you do a cold e-mail solicitation, be sure to have a clear subject line that helps the editor see that you are volunteering to review a new publication for them. Within your e-mail, have a clear direction for what you are suggesting while at the same time communicating that you are open to other options they may offer. Having a specific text in mind that you have recently read and would like to review is a good idea, but often journals will have texts they need to be reviewed in upcoming issues. Providing an updated cv and an overview of your scholarly interests will help the review editor determine which text they have in mind might best align with your interests and allow you to provide an expert assessment of the text's value to the field.

¹ H-Net is currently under transition to a new network; however, [this link](#) sends you to the older reviews page, and [this one](#) will send you to their newer commons page. [U-Penn's CFP site](#) is a great general source not just for finding review opportunities but also finding conferences calls and article solicitations for special issues.

² Be sure the journal takes unsolicited reviews. Some journals are solicitation only. Research in the journal's directory should help with resolving this.

o Dear Dr. _____,

I am e-mailing you to offer my services as a reviewer for an upcoming issue of [Name of Journal]. I have attached an updated curriculum vitae which will highlight my interests in [short listing of subfields you are working in]. I am amenable to reviewing any new publications and welcome your assignment. Should require a writing sample, I have attached a review I wrote on [book title] [If there is a specific text you would like to review, offer it here (i.e. [title of specific text] aligns with my interest and is offering new contributions to the field, but I of course defer to the journal's needs.)] Thank you so much for the opportunity, and I hope to hear back from you soon.

Be sure you allow yourself reasonable time to read the book and write your review since your contact with the book review editor may lead to excellent publication opportunities in the future. Finally, be aware that editors are often flush with emails, and long silence should not be taken personally. If e-mail contacts do not prove productive, attend editor and journal panels at your national conferences with hopes of making more personal contact. While most of the work we do can be done digitally, it's important to remember than person-to-person contact is important in creating opportunities for yourself at the beginning of your career.