

Ad Copy & Taglines Formulas

CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Genre, character/plot, conflict/tension, curiosity, and social proof** are the five pillars of effective ad taglines and copy. **Genre** must always be clear; usually at least one of the others should be included as well.
- Note that some of these can be communicated through the image (e.g. a couple embracing portrays that the genre is romance).
 - **Focus the ad on single genre** if the book is a genre mash-up; you can subtly allude to other elements, but focus on one core thread. You can test each genre (for example, pitch your book as an urban fantasy in one ad and a paranormal romance in another) to see which works best.
 - You want the ad to drill down to the **sub-genre**; not just romance, but sports romance, and even a hockey sports romance. Not just fantasy, but urban fantasy.
 - Books are inherently about **characters**. Some are more **plot** driven (thrillers/mysteries often skew this way), but even in these situations it's almost always a *character* that keeps readers returning book after book.
 - You can write copy from a character driven or plot driven angle.
 - **Conflict and tension** are the foundation of storytelling, which make them extremely effective in ad copy. Focus on a single strong **core conflict** rather than sub-plots; too many plot threads creates confusion.
 - Perhaps the most powerful question in fiction is **what happens next?** Just as in a book, **curiosity** helps propel the reader to take the next action. In a book, that's flipping the page; with an ad, that's clicking over to Amazon and buying. Intriguing hooks and cliffhangers are powerful in ad copy.
 - **Social proof** is massively helpful. **Review content** is much more important than the source. You're looking for reader quotes that are passionate/enthusiastic and also highlight the genre. These work far better than a generic pullquote from a high quality publication or well-known author.
- **VERY IMPORTANT:** You don't have to include all five elements in every ad—and you probably *shouldn't* in 99% of instances. 1 + 1 + 1 does not equal three; it can equal 3,000 or -4. Too many elements competing for attention will dilute the effectiveness of your core message. **When in doubt, simplify.**
 - Genre + social proof match well with all the other elements.
- **Speak to readers in *their* language.** Examine reviews, emails/posts/comments from fans, etc. to identify common words they use and tropes/concepts/hooks they're interested in. Try to incorporate these into your copy.

- **FREE**, if the book is free, should *always* be mentioned—it will be more important than all other elements and drive CPC down the most (Facebook/BookBub only)
- **NEW**, if the book is new, should also usually be mentioned—this is powerful and a hook in and of itself. Humans are drawn to *new* things in general, and books are no different.

HEADLINES & TAGLINES

These are generally 5 – 15 words. Headlines and taglines can either be used as the sole copy (e.g. on Amazon or BookBub, where space is limited), or as the actual headline (on Facebook) coupled with some longer copy.

These can be combined to form new permutations and longer copy: e.g., Fan of urban fantasy (LIKE)? Don't miss *Lightning Blade*, the debut novel in the *USA Today* Bestselling trilogy (ACCOLADE)—available for free until August 8 (DEAL).

You can also combine them with the hook-based taglines/headlines.

These are just starting points; you can adjust and tweak them. There are an almost infinite number of ways to present a \$0.99 deal, from simply stating the price to saying *700+ pages of reading for \$0.99!*

1. **DEAL** [Facebook/BookBub only; Amazon doesn't allow prices or dates]
 - a. **PRICE**
 - i. *Demon Rogue* is just \$0.99 until August 8
 - ii. FREE Urban Fantasy book!
 - iii. FREE [emoji] FREE [emoji] FREE
 - b. **KU**
 - i. Read Free in Kindle Unlimited
 - ii. Complete Urban Fantasy Series Free in Kindle Unlimited
 - iii. Steamy Paranormal Romance Free in Kindle Unlimited (can add emojis)
 - c. **PERCENTAGE:** Save 80% on *Demon Rogue* until August 8
 - d. **LESS SPECIFIC:** Grab your discounted copy of *Demon Rogue* for a limited time!
2. **LIKE/LOVE**
 - a. **IF, THEN:** If you like urban fantasy, then you'll love Kalos Aeon and his snarky companions.
 - b. **QUESTION (genre)**
 - i. Like urban fantasy? Check out the new series from *USA Today* Bestselling author D.N. Erikson.
 - ii. Looking for your next psychological thriller? Then try the new Westmont Murder series

- c. **QUESTION (author):** Do you love Jim Butcher? Then you'll love Kalos Aeon and his ancient talking dog.
 - d. **YOUR NEXT:** Your next urban fantasy binge read
 - e. **PERFECT:** Perfect for fans of Jim Butcher and Ilona Andrews.
 - f. **MEETS:** *The Hunger Games* meets urban fantasy in this non-stop supernatural thrill-ride.
- 3. ACCOLADE**
- a. **Review Quote**
 - i. Don't miss the series readers are calling "a magical ride with unforgettable characters."
 - ii. "So hot my heart and Kindle melted!!"
 - b. **Accolade (award):** Check out the Nebula-award nominated series that Author McFakington calls "a riveting science fiction romp beyond your wildest imagination."
- 4. HYPE:**
- a. a GRIPPING psychological thriller with a twist you won't see coming
- 5. NEW**
- a. Hot New Romance FREE in Kindle Unlimited
 - b. The New Police Procedural Series
 - c. The New Mystery from *New York Times* Bestseller Joe Author
- 6. GENRE SPECIFIC POWER WORDS/ADJECTIVES:** the key here is to speak to readers in *their* language. Look at the reviews for the words they use.
- a. A white-knuckle thrill-ride (thriller)
 - b. An epic magical adventure (epic fantasy)
 - c. A page-turning procedural (mystery)

HOOKS: these sum up the book's key selling point in a few words. You'll have to test a few, as the right angle will trounce the others and make a huge difference in ad performance.

1. **PLOT:** Kalos Aeon has three days to save the world. Better get started.
2. **CHARACTER:** Kalos Aeon lives by a simple code. Saving the world might make him break it.
3. **CLIFFHANGER/STAKES:** can Kalos save the world before a Demon King ends it?
4. **CONCEPT:** What if today never ended...and you were the only one who knew?
5. **COMPARISON:** *Groundhog Day* meets urban fantasy
6. **TAGLINE:** Half-demon, all anarchy.

FACEBOOK COPY

Copy only applies Facebook, since it's the only platform that allows you to write more than ~30 – 40 words. Note that you can also use the shorter tagline/headline formulas illustrated above as your main Facebook copy instead.

1. **BLURB:** You can either use the first part of the blurb (the “lead”) or the entire thing. Another alternative is the first sentence + last sentence of the blurb, which usually intros the main character and establishes the stakes.
2. **EXCERPT:** Pull a high-conflict excerpt featuring the main character (or two main characters, if this is a romance or book with two leads) and a lot of dialogue (introduces white space and inherently has conflict and shows the characters). End it on a cliffhanger.
 - a. This can be short, or it can be an entire chapter. Edit out expletives; these can cause your ad to be rejected.
3. **ANTAGONIST-PROTAGANIST:** illustrate the book’s core plot/stakes/conflict through the relationship between hero and villain.
 - a. A necromancer is killing public officials. And Ruby Callaway’s next on his list.
4. **HERO – HEROINE – CONFLICT/STAKES/QUESTION (romance).** A simple three sentence romance formula. Same general idea as antagonist, protagonist. Can just use hero-heroine part for a two-sentence piece of copy. Often takes a *he’s a...she’s a...* format.
 - a. He’s a real-estate billionaire used to getting his way. She’s head of the local preservation society. But when he tries to buy the local forest, he’ll finally meet the first thing in his life money can’t buy.
 - b. Jax Jones dishes out shots every day on the ice...and takes plenty off them. And team GM Melanie Reynolds is SO over hard-partying athletes.
5. **TEASER: 1 – 2 SENTENCE TEASER – REVIEW QUOTE – CTA**

This is a simple format that’s effective across all genres. It’s one of my main go-tos. Note that you can use the 1 – 2 sentence teaser all by itself, or end it with a CTA:

1. **TEASER:** establishes the book’s core character(s)/stakes in 1 – 2 sentences.
2. **REVIEW:** Next is an enthusiastic review quote (or two) evocative of the genre.
3. **CTA:** End with a call to action (including a link—depending on the retailer, the links can get unwieldy, so you can use a link shortener like bit.ly if the formatting looks hairy).

TEASER EXAMPLE 1

Jax Jones dishes out shots every day on the ice...and takes plenty off them. And team GM Melanie Reynolds is SO over hard-partying athletes.

Don’t miss the scorching hot new hockey romance readers are calling “the can’t miss sports romance of the year” and said “scored a goal on my heart.”

FREE IN KINDLE UNLIMITED > [link]

TEASER EXAMPLE 2

Ruby Callaway has spent two centuries scrapping to survive. But none of that can prepare her for a day that doesn't end.

Check out the magic-packed first novel in the *USA Today Bestselling* urban fantasy series readers are calling “so different that it just works.”

TEASER EXAMPLE 3

I'm Kalos Aeon. I've been around for longer than you could know—and most people don't want to know me, being half-demon, and all—but right now I've got a problem.

“Page turner which doesn't disappoint”

“I was a bit amazed I would like this as independent authors can be quite hit or miss. This one is a hit!”

READ NOW > [\[link\]](#)