

# FREE MINI-MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUE

By writing mentor Jim Parsons



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Be aware that, while this assessment of your practical writing skills and crafting will allow me to offer insights into the strength and weaknesses of your work, it has the limitation that I cannot comment on overall plot development, character development, plot arc of tension, Darkest Moment and Climax – those aspects of story that are unique to each novel. That service is a later option, of course.

Nevertheless, these 4 short excerpts are a microcosm of your manuscript; the advice I give will be useful to you, because the same strengths and weaknesses will be present throughout your entire manuscript.

*This service is free and entirely without obligation.* Yes, I am showcasing my own skills as writing mentor and promoting the services I offer, so, of course, it follows that I will suggest how best I can help you with your writing aspirations. *HOWEVER*, you alone decide whether to take up the offer, balancing the quality and value you find in my work with the associated cost. Should you decide not to engage my services, be assured you will not be pestered or sent junk mail.

The four exercises are on the next page.

Please adhere to the word count (approx. 1/2 page of single-spaced typing per exercise) so that the finished assessment is *no more than 2 pages of your writing*. This free service is popular, so, in order to give my best and be fair to each applicant, I cannot critique pieces that run over length, no matter how talented the writer.

I look forward to reviewing your work – please give the writing tasks your best shot. Make the most of this opportunity for a professional assessment.

Find the most appropriate snippet from your manuscript to meet the requirements of the writing task, because I will be assessing them as if they were in a published novel!

Cheers, Jim Parsons

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Please send your completed assignment to

[writing-course@hotmail.com](mailto:writing-course@hotmail.com)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **TASK 1 – Opening paragraphs of your novel**

Please paste the very first paragraphs of your opening chapter into this task. (If there's a Prologue, use that ... I want to assess what the reader gets to see first up). Make this approximately ½ page, even if that means stopping mid-sentence.

## **TASK 2 – a snatch of dialogue**

This ½ page excerpt should be dialogue that furthers the plot or explores character. Please choose carefully: if you present a passage that is simply 'talking heads', I will presume you don't know how to write dialogue that sits naturally within setting and action.

## **TASK 3 – a descriptive passage**

Choose a ½ page that describes a place, building or room, preferably in a passage that establishes mood. It is usual for this to show the protagonist (Main Character) interacting with the setting.

## **TASK 4 – Show me what you can do**

This ½ page excerpt from your novel is your choice – your opportunity to shine. Choose a passage you are really proud of and that you feel best reflects your style.