

Your Ultimate
FREE Guide to
Bookstagram & BookTok

 Kari Lynn M.

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How to Start Your Bookstagram Account

If you're completely new to Bookstagram (or maybe even to Instagram), and you don't already have an account—that's okay! Everyone's gotta start somewhere, and there's no better time to get set-up than the present.

Let's take things step by step, starting with how to physically create your first (or next!) Bookstagram account. And, if you already have an account made, I encourage you to still follow along to hear all of the best practices. You may even find areas where you can refresh your profile!

Step 1: Opening Instagram

Yes, seriously, we are taking things in baby steps here, starting with how to actually open Instagram. Stick with me, though, because I may share something you didn't already know!

Perhaps the easiest and most common way to open and use Instagram is through the official Instagram app, which is available to download for free from the App Store (the official download store for Apple and iOS devices) or from Google Play (the official download store for Android devices). When you go to download Instagram through one of these stores, make sure you choose the official Instagram app, not any of the knockoff competitors. You can tell if it's actually Insta, though, by checking the app downloads and app ranking. For example, Instagram has been at or close to the #1 ranking for Photo & Video apps on the App Store since its launch in 2010, and none of its lookalike apps have come even close to that ranking.

App Store Preview

This app is available only on the App Store for iPhone.



Instagram 12+

Instagram, Inc.

#2 in Photo & Video

★★★★★ 4.7 • 26.2M Ratings

Free · Offers In-App Purchases

Screenshot of Instagram on the App Store, taken April 2024

As of April of 2024, the Instagram app has only been available for iPhone and Android smartphones plus some Android tablets. This app is also not compatible with some devices that do not have updated system software, so the best way to check your personal device's compatibility is by checking out the app on the App Store or on Google Play for yourself.

Instagram

Instagram

Contains ads · In-app purchases

4.0★
153M reviews

5B+
Downloads

Editors' Choice

Teen

Install on more devices

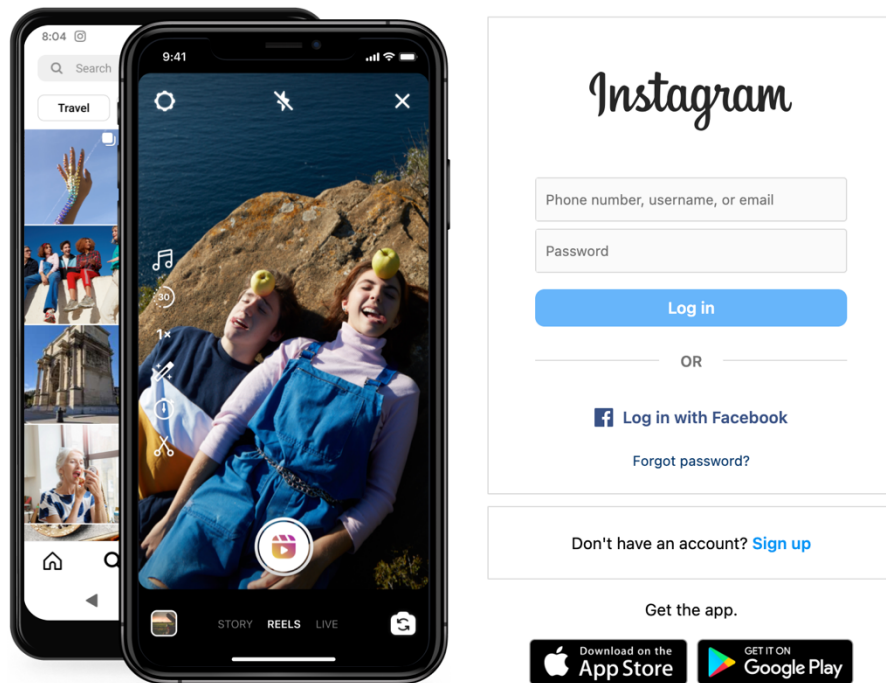
Share



Screenshot of Instagram on Google Play, taken April 2024

Alternatively, Instagram is available to use through a website-based platform, that is, outside of the app. This is a great way to access Instagram if you cannot download the app or if the app is not compatible with your device!

To access the official Instagram website, visit [Instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com) through your web browser. This is the best way to get onto Insta from an iPad, FYI, which some people don't know!



Screenshot of Instagram.com, taken April 2024

A Fun Fact that Will Make You Feel Quite Old (or Quite Young):

I joined Instagram during its “industrial boom” when I was in high school, circa 2012. Back then, I didn’t have a smartphone yet (I had a slider for texting, though!), so the only way I could access Instagram was through an app add-on to the Chrome browser on my school laptop. I also had to take all of my pictures for my posts with my webcam. Oh, those were the days!


Step 2: Creating an Account

Now, this section should be pretty straight-forward, but it always helps to build your profile slowly to ensure you don’t, you know, irreversibly mess things up. (Although just about everything can be easily changed later on the process; don’t worry.)

To start, open the Instagram website or app, then hit ‘Create New Account’.

Instagram

Sign up to see photos and videos from your friends.

 Log in with Facebook

OR

Mobile Number or Email

Full Name

Username

Password

People who use our service may have uploaded your contact information to Instagram. [Learn More](#)

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms](#) , [Privacy Policy](#) and [Cookies Policy](#) .

Sign up

Screenshot of [instagram.com/accounts/emailsignup/](https://www.instagram.com/accounts/emailsignup/), taken April 2024

Bookstagram Username Ideas

Setting your username is like setting your identity—only there isn't any fingerprinting involved. When you're looking for the perfect name to bestow upon your new Bookstagram account, think of usernames that include words and phrases like...

- Biblio (or bibliophile)
- Bookish
- Read (or reader, reads, reading)
- Chapter
- Bookshelf
- Pages
- Bookmark
- Literary
- Library
- Bookworm

Note:

If you are also signed into a Facebook account on your device, you will have the additional option to create an account with Facebook. Choosing this option will speed up the account creation process a little since it will pull relevant information about you directly from Facebook. You still can create an account from scratch, though, if you'd like to enter new information (such as your name).

If you are making a new account without Facebook, you will need to enter things like an email address or mobile phone number, a password for signing into your new account, your birthday (use your own, even if this is going to be an account for your book-loving pets!), your name, and, of course, a username.

- Reviewer (or reviews)
- Recs (or recommends)
- Stories
- Paperback
- Hardcover
- Book club

You can also include something like your favorite genre or the title of your favorite book series into your username. Remember, your username should reflect your personality and the “vibe” of your account—if you want to post mainly about fantasy books, avoid choosing a name like “TheRomanticismReader”. Although, if you want to post a lot about romance books... that’s a pretty good username, just saying...

A Note on Numbers:

When you want to use a username that is already in existence, it can be super tempting to just pop a couple of random numbers on the end of it and call it a day. However, this isn’t the best practice for building your Bookstagram identity. After all, if someone already has the username you really wanted to use, then that person has also already claimed that identity, with or without the added numbers.

You should also consider your username as the name of your book “brand”. Of course, we will explore branding yourself as a Bookstagrammer later on in this guide, but, for now, just know that your username should be the first thing that others know you by, so make it memorable!

The following list includes some examples of great Bookstagram usernames. Avoid copying anything directly from this list, but use it as inspiration to come up with a name that is truly uniquely yours.

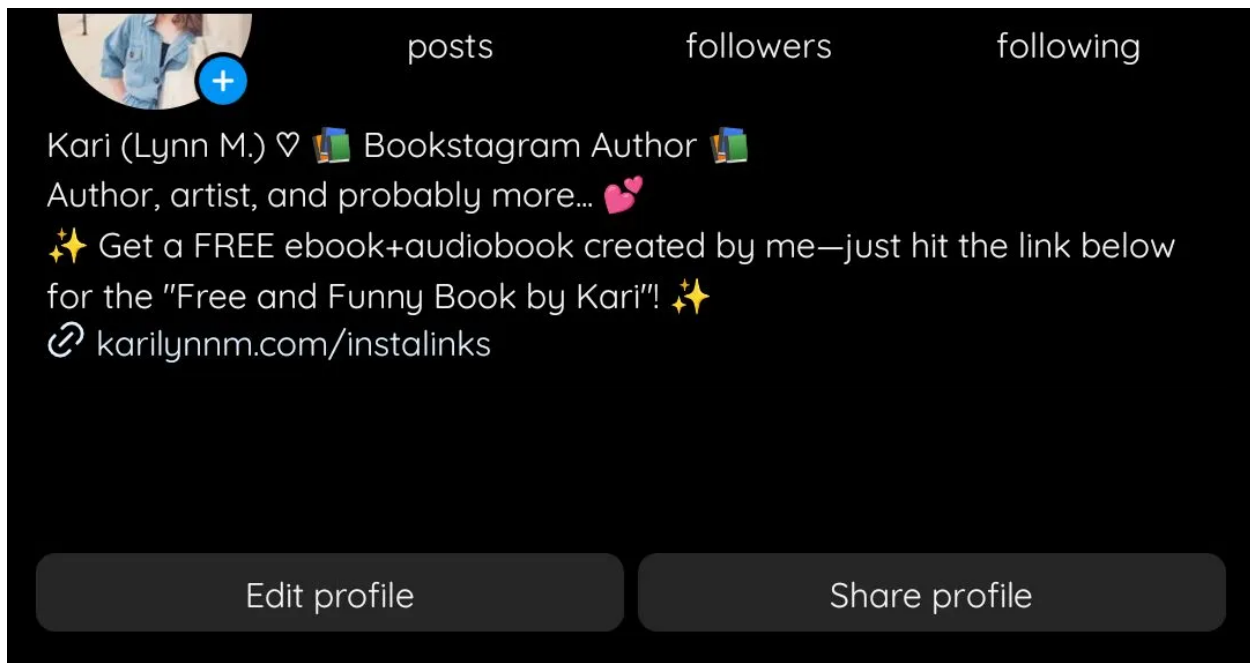
- FantasticBeastlyReader
- KaysLifeInPages
- TalkingBookishRecs
- OneMoreBookshelf
- LiteraryDaisiesAndMe
- ChaptersOfChealsea
- HardcoverHardknocks

Step 3: Completing Your Profile

After you've got the bones of your Instagram account in place, you can start... uh, adding to those bones. Right?

Basically, I'm trying to say that you need to fill out your Bookstagram profile, and you should fill it completely to make yourself as "friendly" to others as possible. Think about it—would you rather follow another account that's as empty and dry and got tumbleweeds rolling across its profile, or would you rather follow another account that's got a full bio, a profile picture, and plenty of posts rolling across its page instead?

Under the profile section of Instagram, you should be able to find a button for editing your overall profile. From there, you should see spaces to enter everything from your name to your pronouns to your bio.



An example of where to find the "Edit profile" button on the Instagram app (edited)

When entering a name for your profile, feel free to use either your real name or a nickname—but don't just re-enter your whole username again. Some Bookstagrammers also like to enter a short descriptor of their profile as a name, too, like "Rom-Com Reviews".

Creating a well-read bio is also important for your profile creation. Use your bio as a space to introduce yourself to other Bookstagrammers and future followers—and don't make it too complicated. You can also use this space to explain what kinds of posts your followers can expect to see from you or just some personal fun facts.

An Example of a Great Bookstagram Bio:

"Hey all, I'm Penelope the perpetual book reviewer! On this page, you'll see all of my current and to-be-reads, plus there's some pics of my kitty, Nia. My favorite genres are YA, romance, and contemporary, how about yours?"

Lastly, you'll want to seal off your profile with a great profile picture. The picture you choose can obviously be changed frequently, so don't worry about picking the perfect photo right away. Your picture can be of yourself, your bookshelf, or anything that fits the vibe of your profile, really, so long as you own the rights to it (don't steal photos off of Google!).

How to Start Your BookTok Account

Starting a BookTok account is really simple, and you can choose to use the same profile information you entered in your Bookstagram account to make it even easier. Otherwise, you can create a BookTok account that has an identity separate from your Bookstagram, or you can stick to just creating a Bookstagram or just creating a BookTok—it's all up to you!

Just as we did with the Instagram walk-through, though, we're gonna take things one step at a time here.

Step 1: Open TikTok

TikTok is a little different from Instagram in that, as of April of 2024, it offers an app that can be downloaded to all iPhones, iPads, iPod touches, and Apple Vision devices with up-to-date software plus most Android devices, including tablets and Chromebooks. This free app can be downloaded directly through either the Apple App Store or Google Play.

App Store Preview

This app is available only on the App Store for iPhone, iPad, and Apple Vision Pro.



TikTok 12+
Videos, Music & Live Streams
[TikTok Ltd.](#)
#1 in Entertainment
★★★★★ 4.7 • 16.8M Ratings
Free · Offers In-App Purchases

Screenshot of TikTok on the App Store, taken April 2024

Note:

Certain countries have limited access to the TikTok app through Google Play and the App Store, so check either of these online stores to ensure you will have access.

TikTok

TikTok Pte. Ltd.
Contains ads · In-app purchases

4.2★
62.4M reviews

1B+
Downloads

Editors' Choice

Teen

Install on more devices

Share

This app is available for your device



Screenshot of TikTok on Google Play, taken April 2024

TikTok also offers a website that allows you to access the platform without the use of the app—however, it should be noted that you may not be able to create an account without also downloading the app due to certain country regulations. To access the website directly, visit TikTok.com.

Step 2: Creating an Account

Setting up your new BookTok account through TikTok is pretty easy as you only need to verify your birthday, enter a valid email address or phone number, create a password, and create a username just as you do when signing up for an Instagram account.

TikTok also offers the option to sign-up for a new account with a Facebook, Google, Instagram, X (Twitter), or Apple account, which can help you speed-up your account creation, if you'd like. And, while you can create an account on the TikTok website, you will probably still have to do some verification through the app as well, so I would recommend you create your new account completely through the app.

When it comes to picking out a BookTok username, pretty much the same rules apply as Bookstagram accounts, so use the same inspiration [we talked about here](#) to make your fresh username.

Log in to TikTok

Use QR code

Use phone / email / username

Continue with Facebook

Continue with Google



OR

Continue as guest

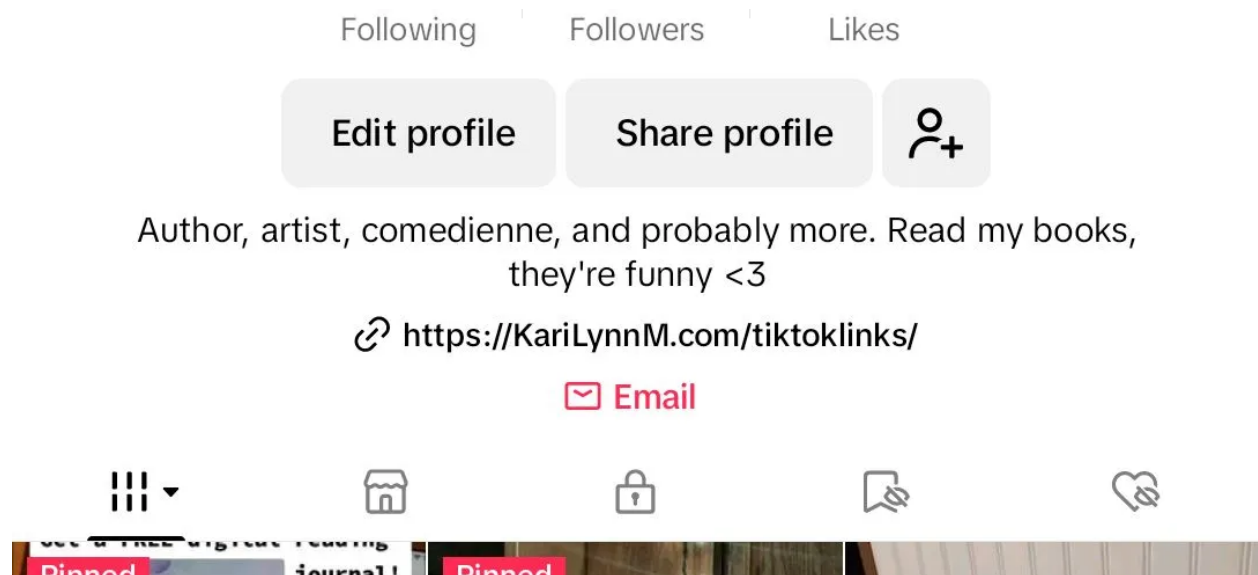
By continuing, you agree to TikTok's [Terms of Service](#) and confirm that you have read TikTok's [Privacy Policy](#).

Don't have an account? [Sign up](#)

Screenshot of the login pop-up on TikTok.com

Step 3: Completing Your Profile

Immediately after finishing the account sign-up process, you'll be able to customize your feed on TikTok by choosing some video topics you are interested in (hint: look for book-related topics to start seeing BookTok content from fellow book lovers right away!). After that, you'll want to fill out a couple of things directly on your profile page to introduce yourself to others, just like we did with Instagram in the previous section.



An example of where to find the "Edit profile" button on the TikTok app

You can edit your profile by hitting the edit button on your profile page (hint: your profile is always in the bottom-right corner of the screen on the app), and then you can give yourself a name, bio, and more. You can also add links to your Instagram and YouTube socials from here, too, if you'd like.

The bio section on TikTok is smaller than that on Instagram, so you may need to reword the bio you created for your Bookstagram a bit to keep it under 80 characters. Make it just one sentence if you need, but remember that this is still your spot to share what makes you and your BookTok unique with others!

An Example of a Great BookTok Bio:

"Penelope the perpetual book reviewer here with YA, romance, and contemp. TBRs!"

Posting

Ah, the thing that makes the social media world go 'round... posts!

Since both Instagram and TikTok are very visually-centered platforms, creating visual posts to catch the eyes of your followers (and potential future followers) is key. We can do this through two ways: making photo-based posts and making video-based posts.

Making Photo-Based Posts

Okay, so... majority of the posting you will do on Instagram will likely be photo-based since Insta is (and has always been) a photo-centered app. Of course, the introduction of videos on the app back in 2013, which has now evolved into Instagram Reels, can also be used to make posts, but... let's be honest, making videos usually takes a heck of a lot more time to do than pictures.

TikTok also has an option to share photo-based posts, but, in my personal experience (you don't have to completely take my word for it), these don't perform nearly as well as videos on the app since TikTok has, and probably always will be, a video-centered platform. Hey, it's just how the virtual cookie crumbles!

When creating photo-based posts, you have a few options. Three options, actually.

One, you can post photos you take yourself.

Two, you can re-post photos taken by others (with the proper rights).

Or, three, you can post photos you digitally create yourself (no, I'm not talking AI here—think more in terms of graphic design!).

Now, let's go into these three choices more in-depth.

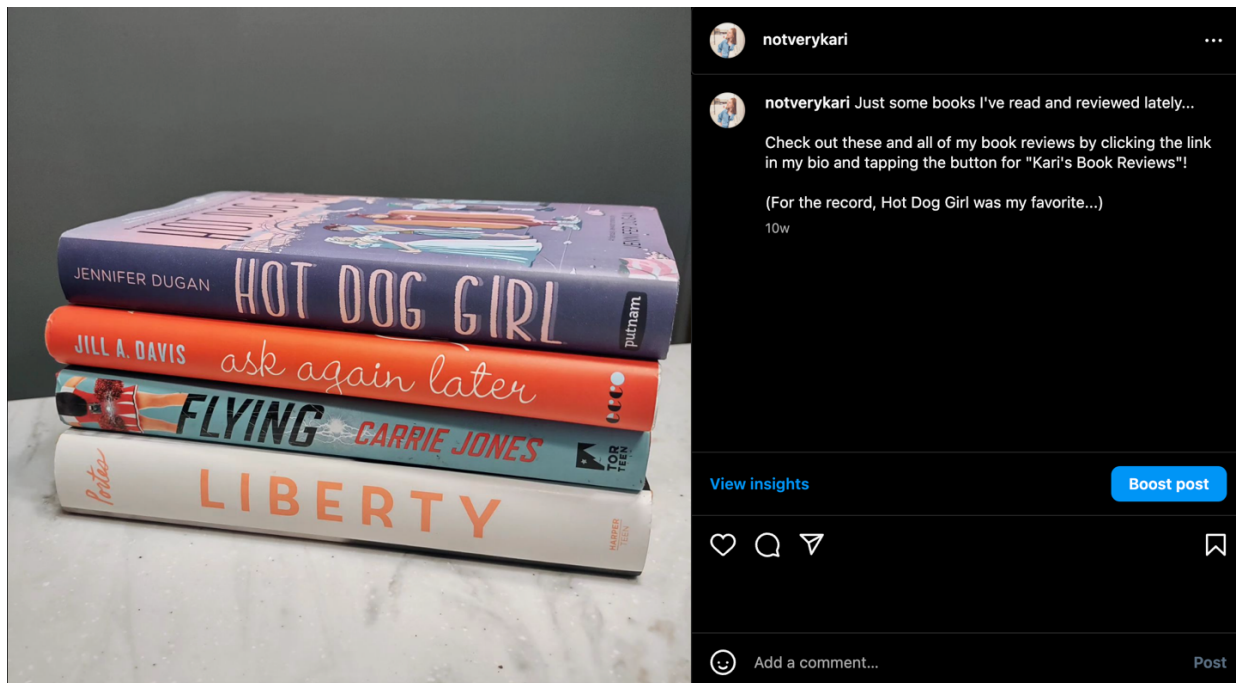
Posting Your Own Photos

Ideally, at least 50% or more of all the photos you share on Bookstagram (and BookTok, if you'd like) should be photos you take yourself. Again, that's just a statistic

I made up based on my experience, but that's really what Instagram was made for, anyway! Followers always like to see original, organic content, and there's nothing better to show them than a unique photo that you took to share with them.

Of course, the types of photos you can take and share vary vastly, but there are some tried-and-true types used by Bookstagrammers all the time. These include...

- Photos of your reading space
- Photos of your TBR stack (or bookshelf)
- Photos of your current read(s)
- Photos of your favorite books
- Photos of highlighted pages (such as quote you highlight)
- Photos of a Kindle or eReader
- Photos of curated reading lists (such as books organized by sub-genre)
- Photos of books organized in a shape or design (such as a heart or cancer ribbon—one of my favorite photos to see!)
- And, not to be forgotten, photos of yourself (with or without your books)



An example of a "recent reviews" post I made on my own Instagram account (edited)

The previous list is not an exhaustive list of all the photos you can take and post to your Bookstagram and BookTok accounts. Being on these platforms requires you to

be creative, so take some time to brainstorm and write down any additional ideas of photos you may like to try in the future.

Now, Instagram does offer the option of posting up to 10 photos in one post, but I would advise you to take advantage of this option sparingly. While it's totally fine to post multiple photos in a group that makes sense (such as multiple shots of each book in your TBR pile), I wouldn't group a bunch of photos together in one post just because you can. Posting often is key (as we'll cover in a moment), so breaking up the number of photos you post at once can really help you reach your goals in terms of number of posts. Think of it like this: would you rather struggle to post 10 photos in a singular post every day, or would you rather chill and just post one photo per post over a 10-day period?

Hint:

For more photo inspiration, search hashtags like #Bookstagram and #BookTok on Instagram and TikTok to see what kinds of photos others have been taking. Don't copy what they have done exactly, but try to see if you can re-create what they've done in your own way.

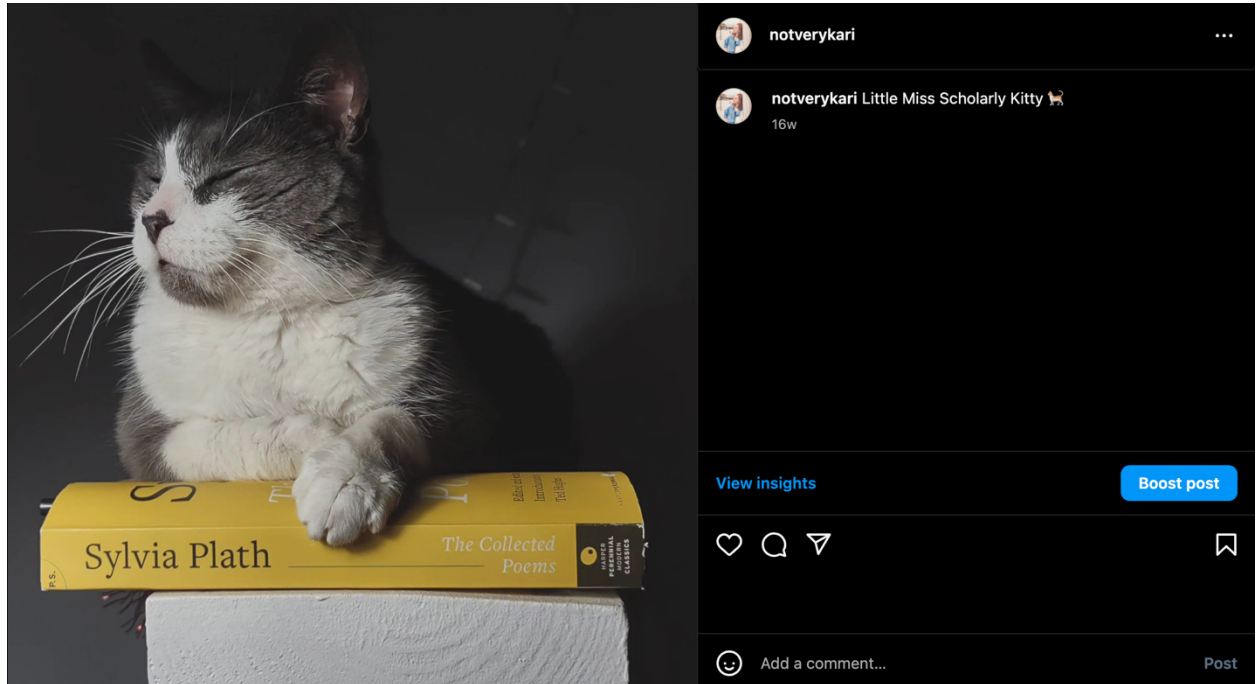
Tips for Taking Bookish Photos

Listen, I'm about to tell you something that might just blow your mind: *you don't have to be a professional photographer to take great photos for social media.*

Actually, with the quality cameras on all smartphones these days (even the cheap ones—and I'm not afraid to admit I currently own the second-least-expensive model that was on the shelves at Best Buy back in 2021), anyone can take amazing photos for their feed. It helps to know some tips for best picture-taking practices, though, too.

1. Use light to your advantage, and don't be afraid to **experiment with natural light**. Personally, I find that taking photos outdoors never fails to provide just the right amount of light—and it's an easy way to get great shots since, literally, everyone has access to outside (or, at least, you know... well, we hope you do!).

For example, you could take some pics of your current read on a blanket or towel, or you could snap one of your hand holding your next book to-read up to the sky.



An example of using the light of a lamp to my advantage in taking a snap of my cat, Mía—and, no I (surprisingly) did not have to shove her into this sweet pose! (edited)

Of course, there are some pictures that must be taken indoors no matter what, including photos of bookshelves. For those cases, try using the natural light of the room as best as you can by opening curtains and shades. If the natural light is too much (sometimes, this can create dark shadows on the things you want to take photos of) or if there is not enough light available, play around with lighting created by overhead light fixtures and movable lamps. Some people like to use a ring light for indoor photography, but you can usually achieve the same results with any lamp fitted with an LED lightbulb if you don't want to go out and buy one of those (hey, they can be expensive, and we're not here to rack up excess costs that *aren't* spent on books!).

2. Understand the rule of thirds, which is a simple photography concept—all it means is that you should *avoid taking completely centered pictures*. Oh, and that *white space is actually your friend*.

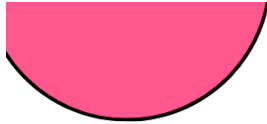
When using the rule of thirds, you can focus on taking a photo of, say, your

Kindle at an angle. Or, you can snap a shot of your open book with the center of the book slightly to the left. Or, you can get a picture of your latest book unboxing with some white space left around it. See the following visual example for a better idea of this!



Thinking in terms of the rule of thirds, compare the above two images. While the first image shows us a book completely centered in the photograph, the second shows us a book slightly offset from center with some added "white space" around it. Which do you find to look more professional?

3. Include *vibrant colors* or choose a *general palette* for your feed aesthetic. Color always makes a picture pop more than black and white or sepia ones, especially when it comes to Bookstagram, where colorful book covers are everywhere. Many Bookstagram accounts like to use a rainbow aesthetic to match all of the varying colors we see on different book covers, but you can also come up with your own color scheme to match the genre you post about most (for example, many books in the horror genre utilize dark grays, blacks, and maybe reds, so you can post photos of other objects [like roses!] or spaces using these colors as well).



@LilBookishRomance

Welcome to my Bookstagram, fellow romance readers!



An example of a romance-themed Bookstagram page with a color palette of mainly reds, pinks, and purples; imagine the color blocks as representations of photos that mainly use that color to create the overall profile aesthetic.

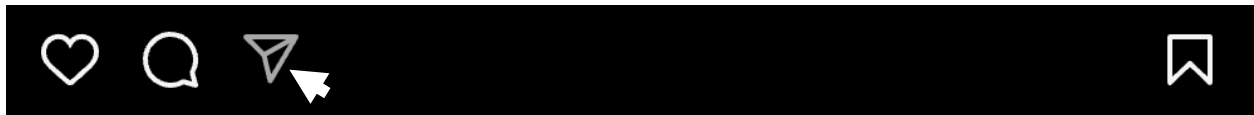
Instagram has always been an aesthetic-based platform, too, and many accounts like to stick to one color palette for their posts. And, while I do encourage you to try this for your own posts, I also want to discourage you from focusing too much on the aesthetic of your profile. If you want to post a couple of photos that don't entirely match your "theme"—that's okay! I would say that a profile that posts about 80% of its photos within its color theme can be allowed to have 20% of its posts "outside" of that theme. And, if the idea of a color aesthetic completely overwhelms you, that's fine, too—just post whatever you want to post with a focus on good general colors in each photograph you take.

Re-Posting Others' Photos

Now, I'd say that this isn't super common on Bookstagram and BookTok, but there are some cases where you may want to post photos that have been shared or taken by others. This is also completely optional, and there are plenty of successful accounts that never do re-posts, but it doesn't hurt to know what is okay or not-so-okay in terms of re-posting.

On Instagram, users can usually repost someone else's photo or video directly to their own Story—that is, unless the original creator does not allow reposts. You really don't need to worry about accidentally reposting something without someone's permission, though, since creators who do not want things to be reposted will turn off the repost function of their posts.

To repost something to your Instagram Story, you'll want to click on the paper airplane-looking button (a very official term, I know) on the post you want to add to your Story. From there, you will see a post/add to your Story option (if the content creator has made this option available), and then you'll be able to add some customization to the photo or video, like text, hashtags, or mentions, before you post it to your Story.



Finding the "paper airplane-looking button" underneath an Instagram post.

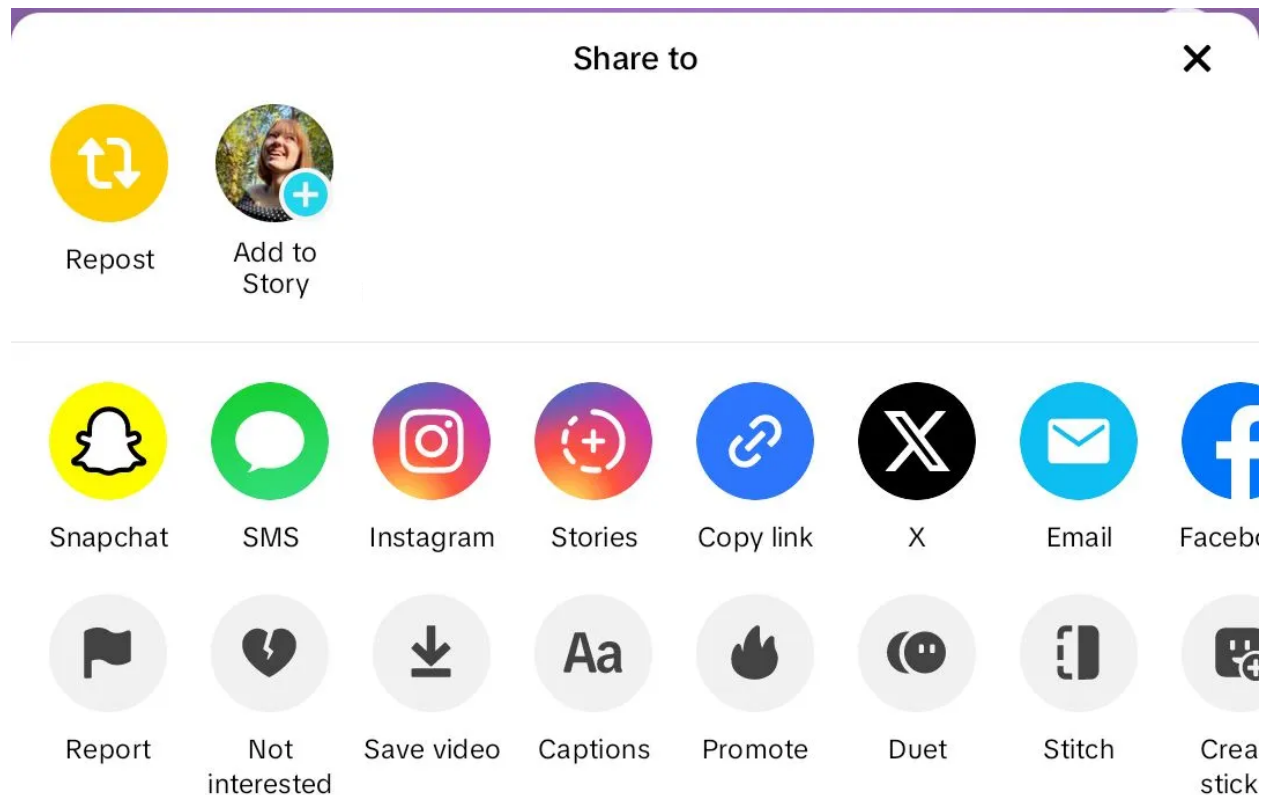
Note:

If you would like to repost a photo or video made by someone else directly to your feed (A.K.A a 'normal' post, not in Stories) on Instagram, you will need to get permission directly from the content creator to do so. Remember, all content posted on Instagram is automatically copyrighted, and you always need to obtain the rights from someone to re-use their content on your feed or off-platform.

If you *do* get direct permission from another member of Bookstagram to use their photo or video (and you can ask them through direct messaging [DMs]), you will need to screenshot that photo or parts of that video since Instagram does not allow

direct image saving. After that, you can upload your screenshot back into Instagram and edit it to fit your post however you would like.

Reposting is incredibly easy on TikTok, and you can repost most videos and photos by clicking the share button, then clicking the repost option. Again, this option may not be available for posts that users wish to keep private.

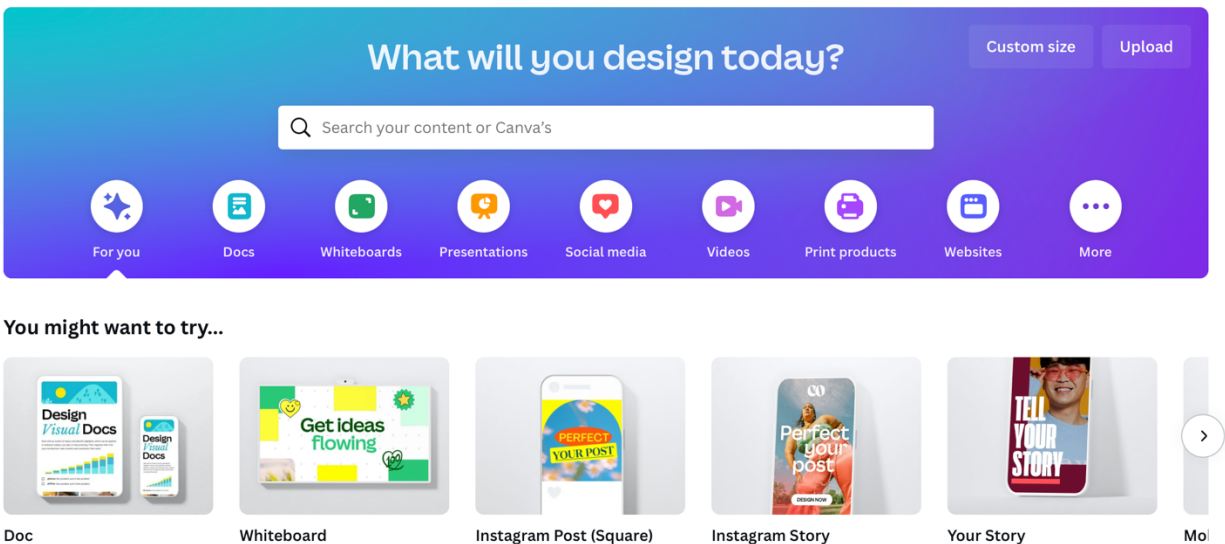


How to find the "Repost" button on TikTok (edited)

Posting Digitally-Created Photos

Okay, now I'm going to share one piece of advice that all Bookstagrammers and BookTokers need to know about: **use Canva**.

If you haven't heard of Canva before, just know that it's the most incredible graphic design website and app in the world (in my opinion, of course... but probably many other digital marketers' opinions, too). With Canva, you can create billions upon billions of digital graphics for your social media pages without any graphic design experience or knowledge... and the best part? It's free to use!

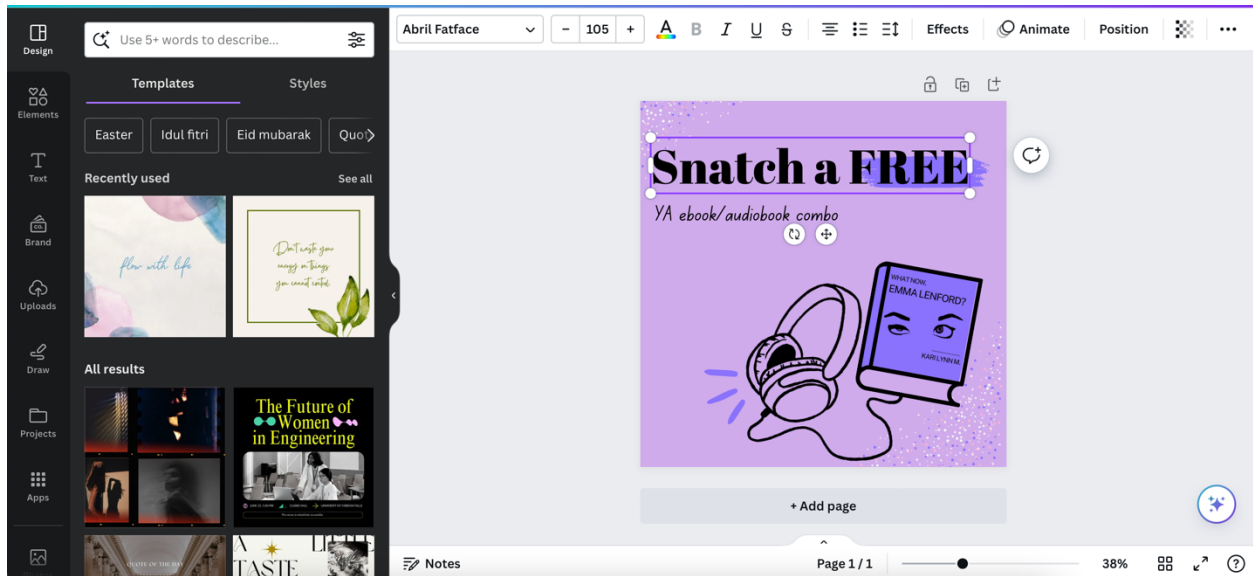


Screenshot of Canva.com, taken April 2024

Canva has lots of social media graphic templates available for you to use (yes, some are paid, but there are plenty of free ones), including ones made specifically for an Instagram post. Personally, I use Canva for just about everything, but, for Instagram, I like to edit the templates to make things like:

- Lots and lots of lists (TBR lists, favorite book/author lists, anticipated book release lists...)
- Announcements (for book reviews, new book blog posts, personal updates...)
- Information on giveaways
- Reading recommendations

Creating a digital post through Canva is also a great way to make extra photos for your Bookstagram and BookTok feeds when you don't have the time (or ideas) to take actual photographs. And, if you come to really love Canva (like I have), you can also use it to help you create a visually attractive blog or website, as we will discuss more toward the end of this book!



Screenshot from Canva.com; an example of a graphic I made for my Instagram to share a free ebook/audiobook with my followers

Making Video-Based Posts

While Instagram takes the cake when it comes to photo-based posting, we all know TikTok is a top dog when it comes to viral videos. Instagram also offers short-form video posting, called Reels, though, so use the information in this section to help boost both your BookTok and Bookstagram presence.

Creating a quality video for social media takes a lot more time and effort than creating a photo, but all the same tips we went over for taking photos also apply to taking videos. For example, use natural light as much as possible, and don't shy away from white space. However, some extra tips apply to videos, such as:

- Keeping things short and sweet (to help maintain the attention of viewers)
- Having a steady camera (minimal shaking—don't give your viewers seasickness)
- Speaking clearly and/or including captions (which are available to add to most TikTok videos)



Often, keeping things simple and on-topic helps videos perform the best with viewers. That being said, I highly recommend ***creating an outline or plan before every video you record***—yes, really, before every single video.

Above all, video-based posts need to feature ***content that is entertaining and/or informative***. It also helps to think of your viewers first and foremost—consider who your viewers might be and what they would be interested in watching. As a BookToker or Bookstagrammer, you probably already watch book-related content put out on social media by others, so think of what you like yourself as a viewer.

An informative “how-to” video on my own TikTok, using bookmarks that I knew my followers would love!

Some great ideas for bookish videos include:

- Videos on your reading recommendations
- Videos featuring your latest book reviews
- Videos covering your favorite/least favorite book tropes
- Videos exploring your reading room/space
- Videos at your favorite bookstore or library
- Videos on book hauls or book unboxings
- Videos on your monthly reading stats
- Videos covering upcoming book releases

Just like photo-based posts, coming up with ideas for your video-based posts may take some time, so be patient with yourself and keep a notebook (or note on your phone) where you can jot down video ideas as they come to you. Don't forget to be creative with it, and remember that you can look to videos done by others for inspiration!

What to Include in Captions

Bookstagram and BookTok are both visual-based platforms, so big blocks of text don't really belong on them. However, having a beefy caption under your photo and video posts can help you connect to other users when a visual just doesn't include everything you want to say; writing a good caption also makes your posts easier for others to find in searches (don't ask why—that's just an unwritten rule that the platform creators don't want you to know about).

Hashtags are a great thing to add to all of your captions, especially on TikTok, which uses hashtags to show your content to relevant viewers using its algorithm. Some book-related hashtags you can use include:

- #bookish
- #bookstagram
- #bookstagrammer
- #booktok
- #readersoftiktok
- #amreading
- #readingcommunity
- #bookrecommendations
- #bookrecs
- #bookblogger
- #bookaholic
- #booknerd
- #bookclub

Including tons and tons of hashtags in your captions isn't really necessary—just 3 to 10 will do the job just fine. Making sure your hashtags are relevant, though, is important—don't include a random #foodie4lyfe if your post has nothing to do with food!

Aside from hashtags (which, I think, *look best placed at the end of captions*, FYI), you should also include at least one line to describe your post in words, ask a relevant question of your followers, or tell your followers something else about your post. And, if you need to create a longer caption, be sure to leave some white space (as an extra line) in between your caption's paragraphs so that it is easy to read.

Some examples of good captions:

I just finished up this fine read on Friday night! What have you been reading this weekend?

#amreading #bookstagram #readingcommunity

I just downloaded all of the books in the 'Emma Lenford' series! I got the first book for free online, and I loved it so much that I had to get all the rest of the books through Google Play.

I've read the first book, 'What Now, Emma Lenford?', and the second book, 'What the Luck, Emma Lenford!' so far. My favorite chapters are definitely from the second book, though. I'm listening to the audiobooks, but I think there are also ebooks available, if you guys want to check them out!

#bookrecs #amreading #bookrecommendations #readersoftiktok

How Often to Post (And Scheduling Posts)

When you first start your Bookstagram and BookTok accounts, it's a good idea to post at least once a day for about a week or two. This helps you not only get acquainted with the online communities, but it also builds up your profile so that others can find and follow you more easily.

After your account is initially started, the number of posts you make per week is totally up to you. I'd recommend, though, posting ***no more than twice a day and no less than once weekly***. You can play around with how often you post, but don't exhaust yourself to post multiple times a day. Posting too often, honestly, also runs a risk of exhausting your followers, and we don't want that!

Bookstagram requires a little more regular posting than BookTok does just because of the platform's nature. On TikTok, users can often find your content on their *For You*

pages even after it's been online for many months (or years), while Instagram tends to show only the newest posts to followers.

For busy bookish people, scheduling content is a great way to ensure you stay on track with your posting goals without running yourself ragged. On Insta, you can automatically schedule as many posts as you'd like up to a month in advance. On TikTok, business accounts can also automatically schedule posts up to 10 days in advance.

In addition to automatically scheduling posts, I recommend scheduling posts even further in advance with a calendar or posting tracker. That way, you can keep yourself sane and organized so that, when life happens, you've already got your plans covered. Oh, and if you're in need of a digital/printable Bookstagram planner... I've got you covered!

Check out this totally free Bookstagram Content Planner—it's a digital PDF, so you can edit it using any PDF editing app on a phone, tablet, or computer... and it's printable, too.

Included are 4 total pages: one content planning page, one book review planner page, one weekly post scheduling page, and one fun 'Bookstagram Content BINGO' page!



[Download the Bookstagram Content Planner Now](#)

Posting Q&A

- Can I post photos I find from search engines (like Google or Bing) on my Bookstagram/BookTok accounts?
 - Reposting photos you find on search engines is discouraged on many social media sites since it may violate copyright laws. Generally, you should only repost photos that you receive direct permission to use (including those from search engines), and you should give credit to the source where those photos came from when you post them.
- Why can't I schedule posts on TikTok?
 - As of April of 2024, only business accounts have access to the post scheduling feature on TikTok. To switch from a personal to business account, you will need to change your account settings on the TikTok app or website.
- Should I post the same content across my Bookstagram and BookTok profiles?
 - Yes! Re-using the content you post on different social media sites is a great way to keep up with your posting schedule when you don't have time to make separate content for separate platforms. It also does not matter too much if you add the same posts to two different social media apps since you will likely be reaching different users on each app.

How to Gain Your Following

One of the most commonly asked questions of all time has to be, “how the heck do I get followers?”

And, look, there a lot of different, and sometimes controversial, methods to gaining a following on any social media site, Bookstagram and BookTok included. However, here, I’m only going to share with you my own method (and, yes, it’s free, and it works!).

And, before we get started, you shouldn’t focus so much on how *many* followers you have (the numbers) but rather how what *quality* of interactions you get from your followers. I mean, think of it—wouldn’t you rather have 100 followers that each like and comment on your posts every week than 1,000 followers that never interact with you ever? Just some food for thought, folks!

The Golden Rule: Follow Others

Listen, I’m a hardcore anti-fan of anybody and everybody who refuses to follow other people on social media. This, yep, includes Eminem (assuming he’s still the epitome of ‘be a leader, not a follower’ with a zero all-time following count on Twitter/X)...

Really, though, if you want to gain good and happy followers, you have to *be* a good and happy follower. Plus, when you follow like-minded accounts on social media, you’ll see content that you’re definitely going to like on your feed every day, and there’s nothing wrong with that.

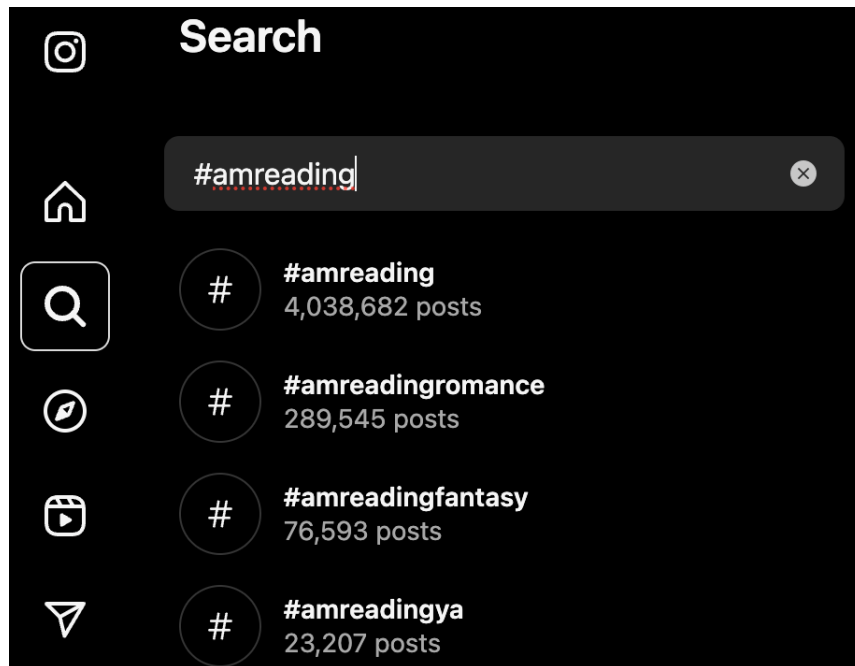
For book-related accounts, this means that you should, ideally, ***follow a lot of other book-related accounts that are interested in following you back***. Finding those people can be tough, which is why I’m here to help!

To Find Your Bookish People

1. Search for them. Like, actually in the search bar.

Book Instagram and BookTok offer in-app search engines that allow you to find other users who post a specific kind of content; in this case, bookish content. In

the search bar of either app, try a search for a relevant hashtag, like #amreading, and then see the posts and users that appear. You can, from there, follow the users that come up and seem well-integrated with the reading community, or you can view all the posts and then go to the user pages behind every post.



Searching for reading-related hashtags on Instagram

2. Look for them through mutuals.

Once you've connected with a good number of fellow bookish accounts, you can look more carefully at their profiles and see who they follow and who follows them. From there, you can follow even more accounts associated with the book community.

3. Look for them in likes and comments.

Sometimes, the accounts that appear in searches and through mutual followers on social media may not be super active, and they may not be available to follow you back as a result. So, you can find more active accounts by looking at users who like and comment on posts made by the people you already follow. Check out the profiles of people who leave nice comments for others, and give them a follow to see if they'd like to be friends!

As you follow others, you can expect a lot of follow-back notifications to come through. Trust me, the bookish community is very welcoming, and there are lots of fellow book lovers that want to see the content you have to share!

Of course, there will also be some accounts that do not follow you back, and that's okay—don't sweat over it. If those accounts post great content that you like seeing in your feed, you can continue to follow them and interact with the others who comment and like their posts. Otherwise, it's totally fine to unfollow those accounts, too.

Hint:

If you'd like to unfollow all accounts that do not follow you back, you may use a safe online unfollow tool, [such as this one](#). Avoid using any programs or apps that require you to share your sign-in information with them, though.

The Other Golden Rule: Post Quality Content

Actively posting and sharing good content is key to finding followers on any social media site, especially those like Instagram and TikTok that are super content-driven. Of course, there are some key differences between "poor" content and "quality" content, though.

When it comes to quality content, sharing the same photo with a slightly different caption every day isn't going to cut it. Instead, ***you need to share content that is valuable to your followers*** (and potential future followers).

Valuable content is something your followers find inspiring, entertaining, or informational. Basically, it can be anything that satisfies their needs—and this is a concept that is always taught in intro-level marketing courses. So, to be a good content creator on BookTok and Bookstagram, it helps to know a few key "marketing" skills!

One of the easiest ways to come up with valuable content ideas is to put yourself in the shoes of your followers (as we briefly discussed in the Making Video-Based Posts section). In terms of Bookstagram and BookTok, this means putting yourself in the

shoes of someone else who is an avid reader, probably much like yourself. So, this means you should think of the type of content you would find valuable coming from any other Bookstagram/BookTok account. Make sense, or have I lost you yet?

For example, if I were to create a Bookstagram account with a focus on fantasy romance novels, I would assume my followers were really into the “romantasy” genre. So, I would also assume that my followers would find value in romantasy content—think topics like “5 romantasy books releasing next month” and “if you liked reading this book, try checking out these similar romantic reads.”

Valuable content doesn’t just have to be a photo or a video, too; it can come along with other forms of media, such as a downloadable file (pst, like *this ebook* you’re reading right now!) or a blog post/webpage. Giveaways are another great form of tangible content, and we’ll cover this in just a bit!

The Other-Other Golden Rule: Stay Active

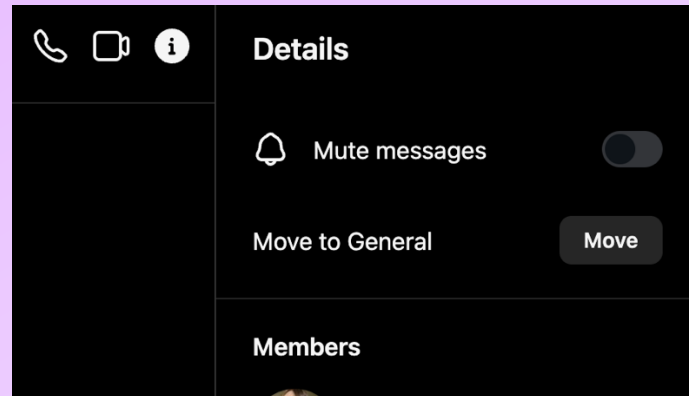
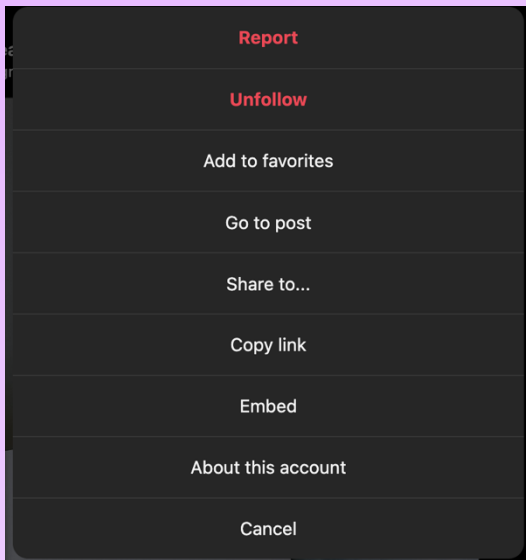
I know, it can be super hard to keep up with posting on social media, and it’s always fine to take a break or hiatus whenever you need. However, the more active you can be on Instagram and TikTok, the more followers you will be able to reach and hopefully gain.

Aside from regular posting, you should also aim to interact with your followers as many times a week as you can—daily is ideal, but you can choose how often you’d like to hop online if that is too much. Remember to give out likes, as this will encourage others to give you more likes back, and drop positive comments pretty often. Remember, social media sites are meant to act as communities, and you need to interact with them to be part of them!

It also helps to follow back most of the followers you gain over time. Of course, you don’t have to follow anyone who you do not want to follow, but it can be encouraging for fellow book lovers to see they have a friend in you! You never know—interacting often with your mutuals may lead to collaborations in the future that will benefit both of your accounts, so never shut anyone out.

Hint:

If you are afraid of overwhelming your feed from following too many accounts, know that you can always “favorite” accounts you want to see the most of on Instagram. TikTok is designed to show you content based on who you interact with most, so muting is not a feature there. On both sites, you can also mute other accounts through messaging if you would like to get fewer notifications of DMs from them.



Left: Clicking the three dots above any person’s post on Instagram will show you a box similar to this with the option of adding the person to your favorites; Above: Clicking on the “i” button at the top of any DM conversation on Instagram will bring up the option to mute message notifications for that conversation

Every Way to Read for Free

The digital age is amazing, isn't it? After all, it's given us lightning-fast communication, millions of video games... and, of course, more ways than ever to read books for free!

Whether you're a seasoned reader or just starting your journey as a book lover, you've probably found out that, well, books can be expensive. And, for those of us on a budget, this can pose a problem for our reading habits...

...But not really. Because, as we're about to reveal, you can *always* read for free!

By Using Libraries

Libraries are probably the first thing you think of when you think "free books." And there's a good reason for that—libraries are great resources for everything from getting books to getting access to public Wi-Fi. And, if you don't already have a card to your own local library, you *need* to... because so many fellow readers will declare a unanimous "shame on you!" if you don't. Trust me.

Typically, there are two main types of libraries out there: public and academic. If you are currently a student (elementary/primary to college/university level, it doesn't matter), you should have access to at least one academic library through your school, and academic libraries are great for accessing nonfiction books, journals, and other online resources, but many also provide access to fiction reading materials as well, so stop by sometime and see what you may find!

Public libraries, on the other hand, are available for all people living in a local geographical area to use. Although the availability of public libraries will vary by state, region, and country, you can probably find out pretty easily if your area has one for you to use. Even where I live, in a very rural area of the United States, there are about five public libraries within my county that I can use, and they are all available for all county residents to use since they are funded by the local government.

Sometimes, you may be able to obtain a library card for a library not in your residential area for a small fee. For example, I've heard of some public libraries offering card to non-residents for a yearly "membership" fee of anywhere between \$40 and \$150, which isn't bad, really, if you plan to check-out many books from the

library instead of buy a hardcover copy (which is usually over \$20) every time you want to read something.

While every academic and public library will function differently, you should know that most (or more and more, these days, at least) offer both physical books/materials for check-out and digital books/materials for check-out. And, with the rise of the digital age, this opens up the doors to so. many. more. free. books!

Most libraries that offer digital items for check-out do so through an app that can be downloaded to your devices. Some of the top library apps out there today, then, include Hoopla, Libby, and Boundless.

hoopla Digital

Midwest Tape LLC

4.7★
172K reviews

1M+
Downloads

Editors' Choice

Teen

Install on more devices

Share

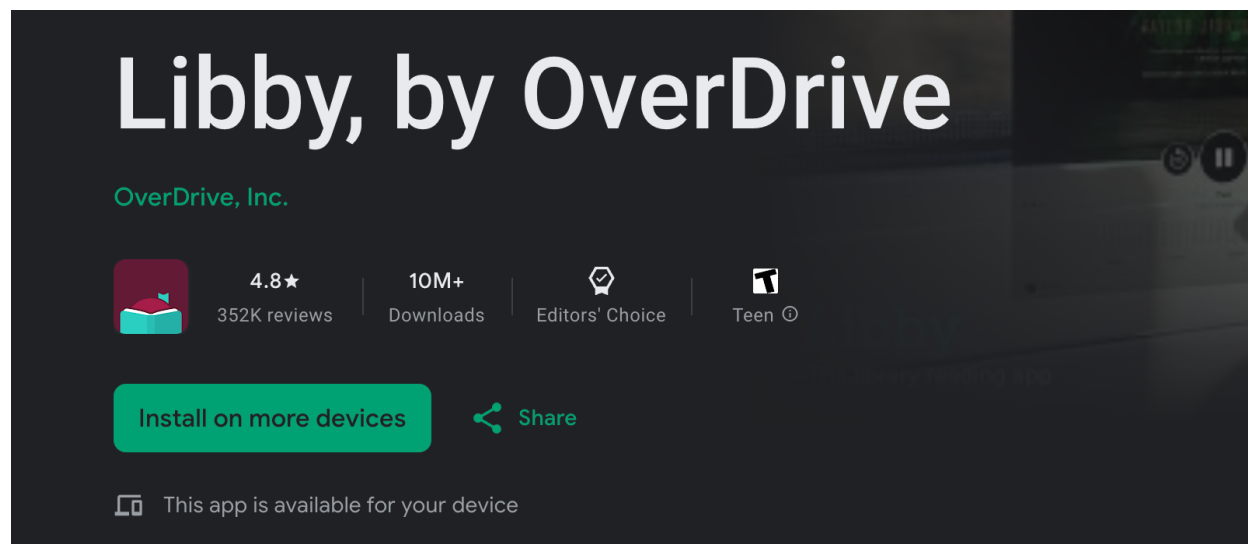
This app is available for your device



Screenshot of the hoopla app on Google Play, taken April 2024

Hoopla isn't exactly the sound that green fish-dude in SpongeBob SquarePants yells consistently in the "Krusty Krab Training Video" episode. Actually, it's an app (and a website, for those who don't have supported devices for the app) that provides access to tons of ebooks, audiobooks, comics, music, movies, and even television shows! To use hoopla, you will need to create an account using your library card, and then you will be allowed to borrow up to 10 items through hoopla each month for free.

Libby is another popular library app (and a website) that provides access to ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines to library cardholders. The number of titles you will be able to borrow (or place a hold on to borrow later) per month will depend on your library's preferences, but you can always see your borrowing limits under your library card profile on the app/website. If you have multiple library cards (for example, two cards from two local libraries), you can add a profile for each card on your account, which will allow you to borrow even more titles each month.



Screenshot of the Libby app on Google Play, taken April 2024

Boundless

Baker & Taylor

3.5★
958 reviews

10K+
Downloads

Everyone

Install

Share Add to wishlist

This app is available for your device



Screenshot of the Boundless app on Google Play, taken April 2024

Boundless is a similar library app that has access to ebooks, audiobooks, videobooks, and video materials. The number of titles you can check-out and hold every month also varies by library, but you can typically expect the limit to be 5 titles for borrowing and 5 titles for holding. It should also be noted that this app used to be called “Axis 360” and that some libraries are still in the process of switching to the newer version of the app.

Of course, the apps that your own local libraries offer for digital borrowing may even be completely different than these (especially since even newer apps are in the works all the time), so ask at your local library to find out how you can read online through them.

“Little libraries” are a new-ish phenomenon popping up in all corners of the world for more free reading. Typically, these are small boxes placed in public areas (think at

parcs, on sidewalks, etc.) that are labeled for “take a book, leave a book” use. Whenever you pass one, consider “checking-out” a book from the box, and then come back later to return it and/or drop off another book for someone else to enjoy!

By Finding “Perma-Free” Books

Lots of *authors like to offer at least one or some of their books for free* to let readers try out their work and see if they would like to read their other available books. I know this because, actually, I happen to be one of these authors!

...Through Online Bookstores

“Perma-free” books is a common term used to mean “permanently free” books, and this means that these books are always free for all readers, and you never need a discount/coupon code or need to enter a giveaway to get them. While some online retailers have a tab to help you search for perma-free books, some don’t offer any books for free because, you know, they refuse to let their authors give away any books for free (because online retailers always take a percentage of the royalties that authors earn, and, if authors offer a free book, that means no profits for the retailers).

Some online bookstores that *do* have a perma-free search section, though, include:

- [Smashwords](#)
- [Barnes & Noble](#)
- [Rakuten Kobo](#)
- [Free-ebooks.net](#)
- [Amazon](#)
- Apple Books (Find free books only in the app)

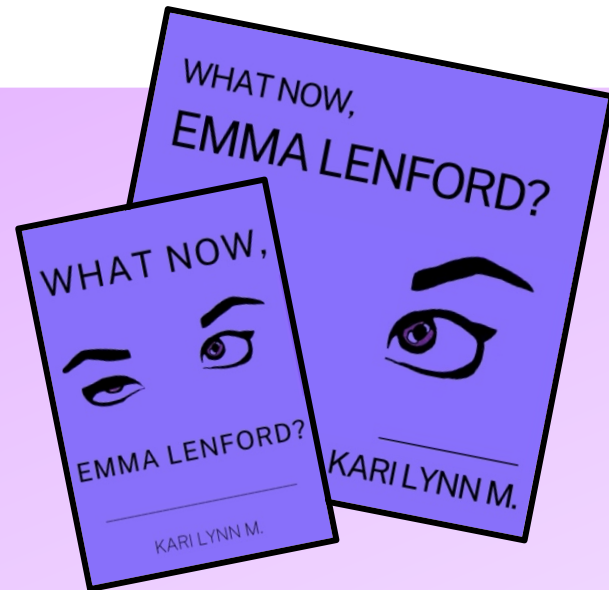
...Through Offers

Another great way to get free books is to get them directly from an author. Many authors like to give away free digital copies of their books (or other words, like short stories) to readers who sign up for something like an email subscriber or SMS subscriber list.

And, actually, I am one of those authors, too—and I'd like to share a totally free book with you right here, right now!

Get a *free ebook and audiobook* copy of my book, *What Now, Emma Lenford?* by signing up to join my email subscriber list! This book, which is the first in my hit "Emma Lenford" series, is a YA comedy of very, very epic proportions.

Check it out, and feel free to share this link with anyone (and everyone) on your Bookstagram and Booktok channels! Remember, sharing is caring, and sharing that sign-up link to snatch up this free book is a great way to help support me as an independent author.



[Download the Free eBook/Audiobook Now](#)

Other authors who give away offers like this typically do so through their own social media and websites, so check the pages of your favorite writers to see if they have any free books available, too.

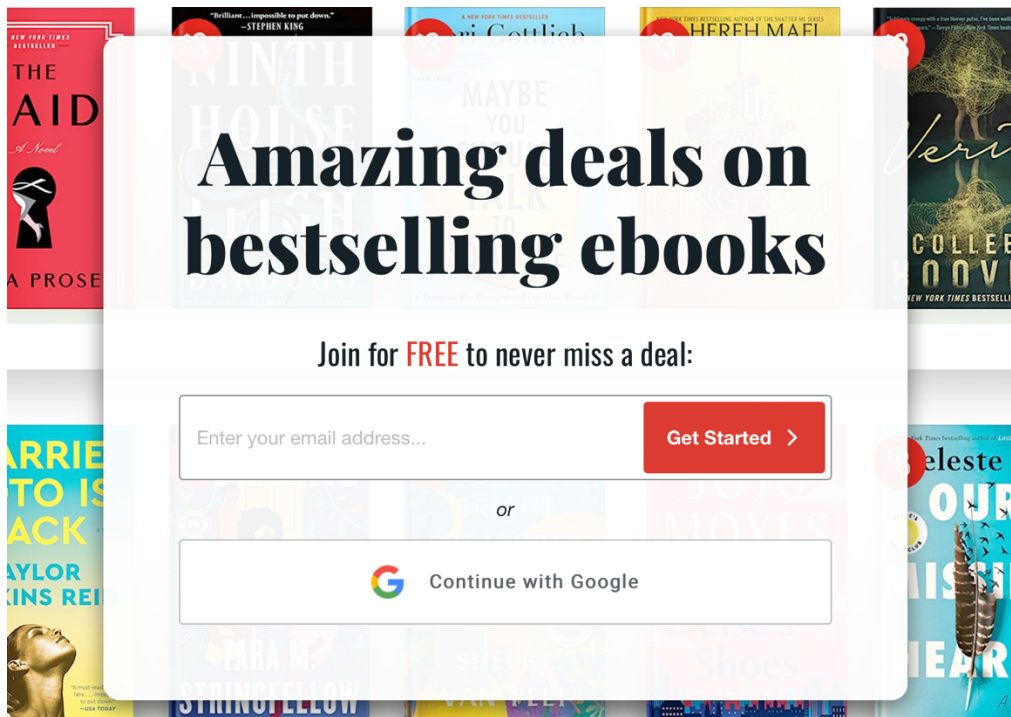
...Through Book Deal Emails

Most readers have probably heard of BookBub. And, if you haven't, here's the low-down!

BookBub is a book advertisement website that sends out daily emails to readers who want to hear about the latest ebook deals within their favorite genres. There are actually a lot of websites that do this, as we'll explore in a moment, but BookBub has been top-dog for many, many years.

You can sign up to create an account through the BookBub website to create a book wishlist and get notifications if and when those books go on sale for a discounted

price or for free. When you sign up to receive emails from BookBub, you can get all of these notifications directly via email, too. You can also get “Featured Deals” emails, which are pretty much newsletters with all of the daily deals in your favorite genres, which you get to pick from a pretty extensive list. And, if you are only interested in getting emails about free book deals, you can select that option when you choose your email preferences.



Screenshot of BookBub.com, taken April 2024

While [BookBub](#) is pretty great for getting some awesome free ebook deals, it's not the only site of its kind out there. Some other sites that offer email notifications for free books include:

- [JustKindleBooks](#)
- [Book Reader Magazine](#)
- [Book Lemur](#)
- [Pretty Hot Books](#)
- [Discount Book Man](#)
- [Robin Reads](#)
- [Free Booksy](#)
- [Ereader News Today](#)

Tip:

Don't sign up to get emails from every book advertising site out there all at once. Otherwise, you'll probably get burnt out from checking them every day (or multiple times a day), and then they'll start to feel like spam in your inbox. Instead, sign up for just 3 email lists maximum at a time.

Your Ultimate Guide to Giveaways

Book (or bookish package) giveaways are popularly held over social media all the time, especially on Bookstagram. Navigating your way through participation in the receiving or giving side of giveaways, though... well, it can be complicated. So, let's sort it all out real quick!

The Receiving Side of Giveaways

Granted, entering giveaways is a lot simpler than hosting them. However, there are still a few things you should know if you want to participate in them—some for **safety reasons**, so read on carefully.

Validate the Account's Credibility

The first thing I always advise fellow readers to do before entering any giveaway is to check out the account hosting the giveaway and look for any "red flags" that the account/giveaway is not legitimate. This is because, these days, scammers and spammers are literally everywhere, and you've just got to do your research to stay safe.

While, I know, we said earlier in the [How to Gain a Following](#) section that follower counts in terms of numbers don't mean everything, one thing I always look for in accounts hosting giveaways is a **strong following**. Now, this doesn't mean the account needs to have 1,000 followers or more or anything, but having, say, less than 10 followers during the time of hosting a giveaway may be concerning. This is because this indicates that the account is not well-established and may be very new (created only within the past week or two), and that's a factor that is usually attributed to all scam and spam accounts.

Another major red flag is an alarmingly low number of posts, and you get a bonus flag if the post about the giveaway is the account's *only* post. Again, this indicates a brand-new account, and that's often associated with spam and scam.

If the account in question passes all the stops up to this point, then there's just one more test to run—seeing if any past giveaways hosted by that account have been called out for being scam/spam or not. This is a step that a lot of people skip, and I urge you to, well, *not* skip it. This is because a lot of people who run fake giveaways

often get away with things by only giving away part of what they promise or just “delaying” the result of the giveaway for ages.

If the account running the giveaway has other giveaway-related posts on their account, check their comments to see how other people reacted to them when they originally ran. And, if there aren't any comments on the posts, that's a red flag, too, since that means the host has probably deleted and/or reported any comments calling them out for running a fake giveaway. Or, if anything, it means that they have turned off commenting on those posts to prevent any accusations of false giveaways from coming in from the get-go.

If you see any suspicions raised from fellow readers on any past giveaway posts, you can feel free to reach out to the commentors in messaging (DMs) to hear more about whether or not the giveaway host is legit or not. Otherwise, you may want to just steer clear of any giveaways run by that spam/scam account—and warn others not to enter them, too.

Be cautious that **book exchanges** are also a type of scam that may be seen on bookish social media, especially Instagram. In many cases, these are pyramid schemes that will only cause you to lose money on buying books for other people, and you probably won't get as many books in exchange as you were initially promised.

In the past, these “exchanges” have popped up on a lot of accounts' Stories or in DMs as something akin to “Enter our worldwide book exchange and earn 36 books! All you have to do is send one book to a stranger, and you will get 36 books back from other strangers all over the globe!”

You should also pay special attention to giveaways that send items to your mailing address since you will only want to give your address to accounts you trust.

Another key red flag of any giveaway scam is the need for you to **pay money (or pay in gift cards)** to anyone else as part of the giveaway—whether that's paid to the giveaway host or someone else. If this is ever asked of you, be sure to report that account and its giveaway posts directly to the social media site—whether it's Instagram, TikTok, or another site.

Follow All Instructions Carefully

Once you are certain a giveaway is legit and safe, you'll want to follow all instructions posted by the giveaway host to properly enter. As we'll discuss in the Giving Side of Giveaways section, giveaways actually benefit both followers and the host, so it's important you follow all directions to thank the host for creating the giveaway when you want to enter. If you skip a step, the host will probably catch it, and they will probably remove your name from the hat when it comes time to announce a winner.

Every giveaway host will create their own rules when it comes to giveaways, so you really need to thoroughly read their posts to understand how to enter. However, there are some key steps that most giveaways require you to follow, including:

- Following the host
- Liking the giveaway post
- Tagging a set number of other accounts in a comment
- Reposting the giveaway post (to your own Story)

In some cases, giveaways will only be open to contestants in the host's country, or they will only be open to everyone 18 and older (or younger with parental consent). This should be included in the caption/instructions section of the giveaway posts, and, if it is not, you can comment or message the host to ask about these additional requirements.

In some other cases, you can gain extra entries into the giveaway by following additional steps. For example, you may get an extra entry for each day you comment on the post.

Once the giveaway is over, you should keep an eye out to see who the winner of the giveaway is, and then congratulate them! If you happen to be the lucky winner, you will also probably get a message from the host with instructions on how to claim your prize. If the prize is digital, you should get a message detailing how to access it, and, if it is a physical prize, you should hear how to receive it, and that is where you may need to provide a mailing address.

The Giving Side of Giveaways

Everybody loves to enter giveaways on social media, but hosting one is a whole different ball game. And while, yes, there are certain legalities you need to address before you start them up, they are a fun way to connect with others all across your country (or worldwide!).

Why Run a Giveaway?

So, let's start things off by stating the obvious: maybe you're not even interested in hosting giveaways. After all, what's in it for you?

Actually, running giveaways is a great way to gain a following, especially on Bookstagram. Giveaways can give *you* a lot of positive attention, and you can gain even more attention by requiring giveaway contestants to share your giveaway post and/or your account with others. That way, the followers of *those* accounts will see your giveaway, probably enter, and possibly share it with even more of their own followers. In the end, all those friends-of-friends will come back to see your giveaway, and then maybe check out your profile, too!

Another benefit of running a giveaway is the chance to connect with other people who love books just as much as you do. A lot of times, these will be people who don't even live anywhere remotely close to you, and you would never have crossed paths with them otherwise. And, honestly, that's kind of freaky to think about... but, again, also very cool.

Lastly, by running a giveaway of your own, you help keep up the giveaway "trend" on social media. While it's not entirely your duty to do this, you should definitely consider running a giveaway as giving back to the bookish community online. After all, we can't have giveaways if no one is willing to host them!

How to Physically Run a Giveaway

Okay, now, let's get down to the nitty-gritty.

I'm sure there are plenty of ways to host giveaways on social media, but I'm just going to share with you the method that I have found to be the easiest. I will describe the steps to you in terms of Bookstagram, too, just because I know that's the most

popular online place for giveaways—but you can totally translate this over to BookTok or even a book-related group on someplace like Facebook. It kind of all works the same on these sites!

Step by step, (*oo baby, gonna get to ya, girl...*) here we go!

But, seriously... New Kids on the Block? Anyone, anyone?

Step 1: Decide What to Give Away

At the heart of every giveaway is, well, something that gets given away!

So, before you even start posting about your next (or first!) giveaway, choose what item or items you want to give out. Note that these can either be physical items (that you will have to ship to the winner[s]) or digital items (that you will provide secure access to online).

Ideas of Physical Items

A lot of giveaways feature prizes that are a collection of book-themed gifts. These can be items that you either purchase to giveaway or make yourself, especially if you are crafty or a lover of DIY projects. You can choose to giveaway one item or multiple items to make a sort of bookish care package for your winner, and some popular items you can put in these gift packages include:

- Bookmarks
- Stickers (preferably book-themed)
- Journals and planners
- Candles
- Trinkets (such as book-related collectable; think of Funko Pops)
- Cups and glassware (such as tumblers)
- Gift cards
- ...Books!

And, of course, the books that you decide to giveaway are all up to you. If you have the funds available, you can buy brand-new books (either paperback or hardcover) and send those to your winner(s). Otherwise, ***gifting gently used books is totally acceptable***, especially if those books were previously owned by you.

Ideas of Digital Items

If you can't afford the cost to ship physical items to giveaway winners (and we will go over the shipping estimates more in-depth in the [following sections](#), don't worry!), creating and sending out digital items is a great alternative.

Remember the graphic design site, Canva, that we talked about in the [Posting Digitally-Created Photos](#) section? Well, Canva not only provides a lot of templates for social media posts, but it also provides a lot of templates for you to use to make digital products.

Some of these digital products you can create for giveaways include things like:

- Reading planners
- Reading trackers/calendars
- Journals (digital or printable)
- Printable bookmarks
- E-gift cards

Above all, your digital gifts for giveaways need to be just as impressive as any physical gifts you would give out. This can be difficult since physical items tend to be more valuable than digital ones—think of how much your favorite books cost in hardcover or paperback versions versus in ebook format. The physical copies are always priced higher than the digital ones, and this is just a reflection of how much the materials are that go into making them.

It should also be noted that you should *expect to spend a lot more time making digital gifts* to give out than you would simply buying a physical gift to give away—don't expect it to be a simple one-hour task! Plus, if you have never created digital products like these before, you will need to spend extra time learning and planning how to bring your digital gift ideas to life.

Step 2: Set Your Rules and Regulations

Now comes the not-so-fun part. Or, at least, much less fun in comparison to picking out your giveaway gifts.

Whenever you create a giveaway, you need to decide on a couple of very important points to follow the regulations set in place by the social media site you would like to run your contest on. For Instagram, this means following the official [Promotion Guidelines](#). These are subject to change at any time, so you should always check with Instagram to see the current guidelines, but the following is a list of items you should adhere to when you host an Instagram giveaway.

1. A clear, complete list of rules for people to enter the giveaway (such as requiring people to follow you and like your giveaway post, which we will cover more in-depth in the [next section](#))
2. The dates and times the contest will run, including the time zone you are running the contest in
3. Participant restrictions, including any age restrictions (a good rule of thumb to follow is indicating all participants should be 18 and older or have parental permission to enter) and what country the contestants must reside in
4. A description of when the winner(s) will be chosen and notified
5. Details on how the winner(s) should claim their prize (typically, this will involve direct messaging [DMing] the winner[s] to obtain an address or email address to send their prizes to)
6. State that your giveaway is not sponsored by or associated with Instagram

Use the following as an example of a good giveaway description that sets and follows all of the above regulations—feel free to copy and re-word or re-use parts of it as you see fit for your own giveaways.

Giveaway Alert!

I am giving away 2 copies of my favorite book for 2 lucky winners!

To enter, make sure you 1) follow me, 2) like this post, and 3) tag one friend in a comment!

This giveaway is open only to residents of the U.S. and Canada who are 18 and older or who have parental permission to enter. Giveaway is open from March 1st, 2024 to March 5th, 2024, 8 a.m. EST to 8 p.m. EST. The winners will be chosen by 12 p.m. EST on March 6th, 2024 and will be notified through direct messaging (DM) by this account with instructions on how to claim your prize, which will require providing me

(Cont. on next page)

with your shipping address. Giveaway is not sponsored, endorsed by, or affiliated with Instagram.

Good luck, bookish friends!

Step 3: Set Your Entry Requirements

Setting up your entry requirements is one part of satisfying the rules and regulations that we mentioned in the previous section, but you should know that you have quite a bit of freedom when it comes to this part. So, yeah, it's a little bit more fun now... but maybe still not as fun as picking the prizes.

I would personally recommend that every giveaway require participants to follow your account as part of your giveaway entry requirements. Of course, requiring this is completely up to you, but this is where running a giveaway benefits you most because it directly helps you gain more of a following.

Aside from a following requirement, you should include at least one other entry requirement since, of course, you don't want to just hold a raffle for all of your followers. Typically, this will include requiring people to like your giveaway post announcement, which is a simple way to get their consent to join the giveaway (meaning they won't press the like button if they aren't interested—but, trust me, they definitely will be!).

You may also ask participants to leave a comment on your giveaway post, specifically a comment that tags somewhere between 1 to 5 other accounts. Even asking for 5 tags is a little excessive, though, and I find that asking for just 2 tags works best (if you ask for too many, some people will pass on leaving a comment altogether, and we don't want to inadvertently discourage commenting). By asking participants to tag others, you can spread the word of your giveaway and gain some more followers through those tags.

Adding more than the above 3 requirements can make things a little tedious for your participants, so I don't exactly recommend it. However, I have also seen some people require participants to re-post their original giveaway post to their Stories instead of leaving a like and/or comment on that original post. You can also do this as a way for

participants to add an extra entry to the giveaway pool, as we're just about to talk about.

Setting Up Extra Entries

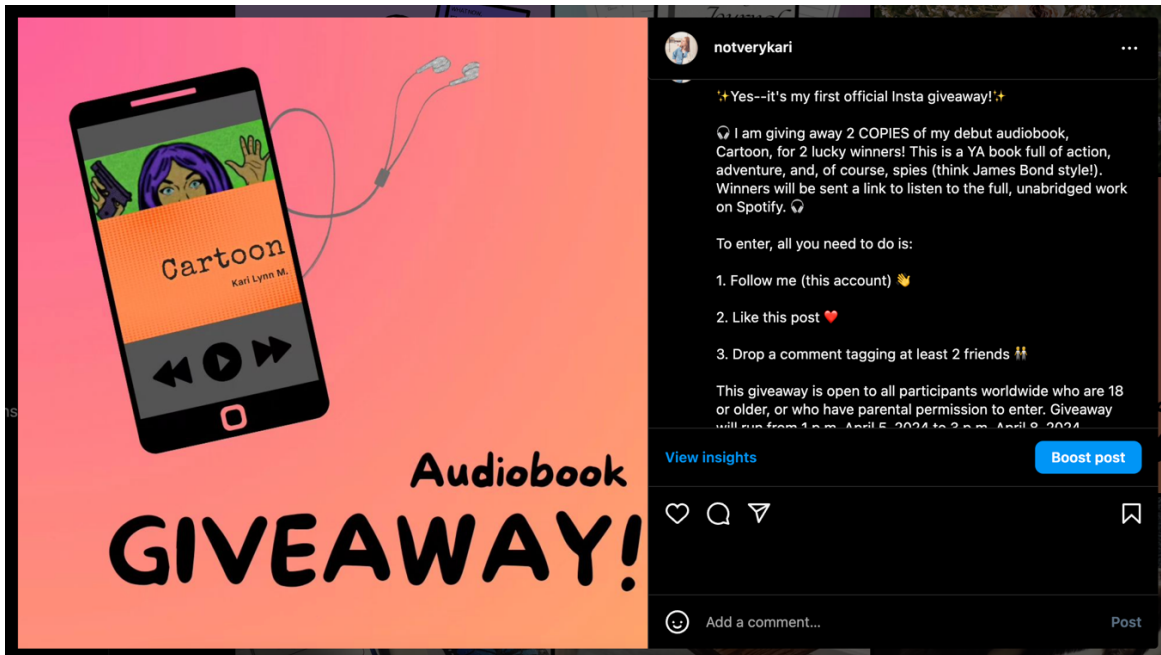
If you really want to get creative with your giveaways, you can create a way for participants to enter your contest more than once, which will give them a higher chance of winning. This is a great way to gain even more interaction with you and your Instagram account while also making certain giveaway entry steps optional for those who want to enter your giveaway quickly.

Aside from the usual follow, like, comment, and even re-post to Stories requirements as we outlined in the last section, you can also allow participants to add extra giveaway entries when they:

- Leave multiple comments with multiple tags on your giveaway post (for example, an extra entry per extra comment and tag for up to, say, 10 entries)
- Like your other posts during the giveaway entry period (for up to a set amount of entries)
- Create their own posts with an entry hashtag that you choose (for example, #EnterXYZsGiveaway, replacing XYZ with your account's @ handle)

Step 4: Creating Your Giveaway Post

I have found that image-based posts work the best for giveaways—not videos. So, to actually announce your giveaway, start by making a photo post using the principles we talked about in the [Making Photo-Based Posts](#) section. Ideally, your giveaway post should feature just one photo that you take yourself of the prizes you plan to offer. However, there are always exceptions where you may need to post a digitally-created picture instead or need to post multiple photos at once; for example, if you are offering to giveaway a book of the winner's choice (and you therefore do not have a photo of the prize) or are giving away multiple prize packages (and therefore need to post separate photos of each package).



An example of a digitally-created picture post I made to host a giveaway for my followers on Instagram (edited)




As you aim to take a photo of your prize(s), make sure that you follow the rules of photography we discussed in the [Tips for Taking Bookish Photos](#) guide. Ensure that you show the prizes in the most visually attractive way possible so that people will *want* to enter your giveaway!

After you have your picture(s) ready to go, get ready to create your caption. Again, include all of the rules and regulations information you already planned out from the previous two steps, but present it in a way that is easy to read and understand.

Just like we talked about in [What to Include in Captions](#), you'll want to come across as *friendly and inviting* to your followers (and future followers)—encourage them to enter your giveaway and let them know everything that makes your prizes awesome!

You'll also want to *leave some white space* in between the sections of your caption to make it all easy to follow since this will likely be a lengthy caption.

You can also *add emojis* within the text, if you'd like, to emphasize certain pieces; see the example on the top of the next page for this.

To enter, make sure you  follow me,  like this post, and tag 3 friends in a comment !

Step 5: Selecting Your Winner(s)

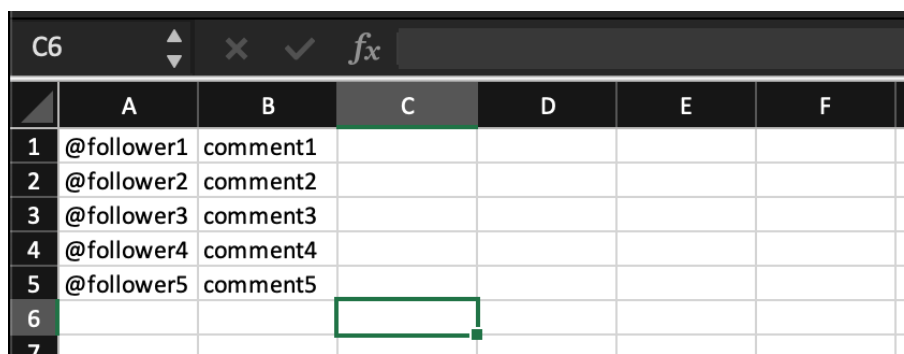
There is really no one set way to choose a winner of any social media giveaway, and it can be a long process if you try to do it all manually. So, to make it as painless as possible, follow these sub-steps!

Note:

Before you even start the process of picking a winner, it's not a bad idea to edit your giveaway post and add a quick statement that the giveaway is now officially closed.

1. Copy and paste the entire comments section of your giveaway post into a spreadsheet-type document—Microsoft Excel works best, but you can also use Google Sheets, which is free for all to use. If you only required participants to leave a like on your giveaway post, then open the full list of likes on the post and copy and paste *that* list into the spreadsheet instead.

When you copy and paste the comments or likes section into a spreadsheet, every “entry” will automatically be placed on a separate line. This is crucial for getting through step #3!



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	@follower1	comment1				
2	@follower2	comment2				
3	@follower3	comment3				
4	@follower4	comment4				
5	@follower5	comment5				
6						
7						

An example of a list of comments by followers in an Excel document

2. If you allowed for extra entries, you will need to add a list of those manually into your spreadsheet by just typing the @ handle of each extra entry on a new line (note that, in Excel, you will have to place an apostrophe before you start typing in any box to avoid creating a “function”). This part may take quite some time, so keep this fact in mind *before* you setup giveaways with extra entry allowances (or keep it in mind for your next giveaway, if you already started one!).

Note:

If you allowed extra comments to count as extra entries, step #2 may not apply to you. This is because all of the comments you copied and pasted from step #1 should already appear as extra entry lines in your spreadsheet.

Make sense, or have I completely lost you yet?

3. Now, you get to physically choose your winner(s)! To do this, use a “random line picker” website (whatever site you use is up to you—just searching for “random line picker” in Google will give you plenty of options) that will choose one winner at a time at random for you. On the site, copy and paste (again) the full contents of your spreadsheet into the entry box on that site. Then, let the site choose the winning line for you, which should include the @ handle of the giveaway participant!

For *multiple winners*, you may also do this *multiple times*—just retry if the site chooses the same winner twice.

4. Lastly, ensure that each of your winners followed your giveaway guidelines properly—if they did not, run the random line drawing again. I include this step *last* and not first because it will save you so much time if you only check that your winners followed your directions; if you check every single entry before you even run the random drawing... well, that might just take forever.

Step 6: Announcing the Results

While you do not necessarily have to share the names of your giveaway winners with everyone on social media, it never hurts to. In fact, making a second post about your

giveaway with a tribute to your winners is a good way to keep up your “good publicity,” if you will.

Your winner(s) announcement post can be anything, really, so long as it names the @ handles of the winner(s) in either the post itself or in the caption. Something as simple as a digitally-created picture that says the text “congratulations” to something as (slightly more) complex as a video of yourself congratulating the winner(s) will work. You’ll want to also tag the winner(s) in the post’s caption, though, so that they will be notified about the announcement.

Note:

Do not tag your winners directly *on* any photo or video post you make to announce their winnings—this is against the policies of Instagram, and it’s not really welcomed on other social sites, either.

You can also edit your original giveaway post to add a quick blurb about the winner(s) of the giveaway, too. For example, you can add a quick ***“Congrats to the winner, @XYZ, of this giveaway! Stay tuned to hear about future giveaways on my account, everyone.”*** to the top of your original post’s caption to let future viewers of your feed to know that this giveaway is closed, but also encourage them to follow you for similar giveaways in the future.

Step 7: How to Deliver the Goods (With a Note on Shipping Price Calculations)

Now, you’re almost complete with your giveaway! There’s just one (quite obvious) step left: *actually* giving your giveaway prize to your winner(s).

While the way you handle the delivery of your “goods” will depend on whether you chose to give out physical or digital products, all handling should be done through direct messages (DMs). When you reach out to notify your winner(s) with a message, try to keep things as professional and positive as possible—you want to make sure your winner(s) will feel comfortable and excited about accepting your gifts, after all.

The following example can serve as a template for you as the initial message you send to any giveaway winners. Feel free to copy, paste, and edit it as you need.

Congratulations, bookish friend!

You are the winner of my recent giveaway, and you have won a set of 3 handmade bookmarks, a small scented candle, and a brand new copy of the book “Cartoon” by Kari Lynn M! To claim your prize, all you need to do is provide a preferred mailing address for me to send your package to. Please know that I will not save or share your address with anyone, and I will only use it to send your prize.

Thank you for participating in my giveaway! If you have any questions about your prize, please let me know.

Then, once your winner has provided you with a mailing address, you will need to package their prizes up and send them out with proper postage. Or, if you are sending out a digital prize, you will need to obtain an email address from them *or* provide them with a link to claim the prize directly.

A Note on Sending Digital Prizes

When it comes to providing access to digital prizes, things are actually pretty simple. Or, at least, simple in comparison to handling postage.

To give out digital prizes, you have two main options: one, you can ***email*** the prizes directly to your winners as an attachment, or, two, you can create something akin to a ***dropbox*** online and send over the private link to access it to your winner(s) through DMs.

When emailing digital files to someone as an attachment, you’ll just want to keep in mind that large files may not send or be received properly, which is why creating a dropbox is a good option. However, by choosing the dropbox route, you will have to keep in mind that not all of your winners may not be as tech-savvy as you when it comes to opening it (or vice-versa—maybe you’re not super familiar with dropboxes). That being said, stick to the route that you think will work best for you.

A Note on Shipping Prizes

Shipping prizes to giveaway recipients is, undoubtedly, more time and money-consuming to do than providing digital prizes. Shipping costs and requirements vary

greatly by country to country, too, but there are some key factors to consider when it comes to the mail/post of most countries:

- Package weight
- Package size
- Shipping distance (both domestic and international)

Obviously, packages that are heavier and larger are going to be more expensive to send than others. I can also tell you from experience (I own an Etsy shop on the side, and I've learned quite a bit about shipping from my years selling items online) that ***just one inch or one pound can drastically change how much it costs*** to ship a package.

For example, here in the U.S., the United States Postal Service tends to charge an extra percentage per pound for all packages that are over 12 inches long (of course, these guidelines are ever-changing, so always check with your local or online post provider to get the latest charges).

Shipping boxes and envelopes can also be quite pricey, so I recommend ***re-using a shipping package*** you already have to cut some extra costs—just make sure that box isn't damaged and that all previous labels are removed from it. Because the size of your package may affect the shipping costs, I also recommend opting for the ***smallest package possible*** for the items you want to ship. Plus, if you have too much extra room in your package after you've boxed everything up, the items inside can move around a lot during shipping, which poses a risk for damage to the items—even if they're just books.

Hint:

You can also ***re-use packing materials***, like bubble wrap, from past shipments you've personally received in your giveaway packages to fill-in any gaps between your items and the sides of the box. This is another great way to save on shipping costs (since you won't have to buy the packing materials), and it actually helps out the environment (since it's basically a form of reusing and recycling).

Sending packages domestically (meaning within your own country) is also much, ***much*** cheaper than sending things internationally—this is why you may have already

noticed a lot of Bookstagram giveaways that are only open to residents of certain countries. Shipping over long distances within your own country can be more expensive, too—for example, shipping from the east coast to the west coast in the U.S. So, if you really would like to keep things local for you when it comes to shipping, you may want to open your giveaways to residents of your own state, territory, or region (but keep things specific and clear for participants to know if they qualify as being in the same region as you).

For international giveaways, you need to ensure you can afford the shipping prices before running the giveaways. You can do this by using an online calculator provided by your country's official post system (or the post provider you prefer to use, such as FedEx or UPS). For those who want to use the United States Postal Service, that online calculator can be [found here](#).

When you use one of these calculators, experiment with what the shipping costs could potentially be if you were to ship an item of a certain size and weight from your location to other countries. Keep in mind that these prices may change daily, too, and that some postage prices tend to be higher in November and December (during the time of many holidays when online shopping peaks).

For any further questions on shipping, either domestically or internationally, be sure to stop by your local postal/shipping office or store.

All About ARCs

Advanced reader copies (known as ARCs) are *unfinalized editions of books that are typically sent out for readers to review prior to their publication*. Not all authors and publishers offer ARCs, but there are plenty that do, and they often look to Bookstagrammers and BookTokers when they have lots of ARCs to pass out.

ARCs are given completely free to readers, but they do expect an honest book review in return—so, if reading and posting book reviews isn't your thing, trying to get your hands on ARCs may not be the best idea for you. However, authors/publishers and readers can build really great relationships that benefit each other by participating in the ARC trading system!

There are a couple of different ways to obtain ARCs as a Bookstagrammer and BookToker, but I'll just cover the most popular options in this section.

How to Get Digital (eBook and Audiobook) ARCs

As you're now probably aware after reading through the Your Ultimate Guide to Giveaways section, it's always cheaper to send out free ebooks than it is to send out hardcopy books. That's why it's also easier to get your hands on digital ARCs—because authors and publishers don't have to pay for shipping to get them to you!

Perhaps the simplest way to get digital ARCs is by finding and requesting them through an online ARC platform, like NetGalley or BookSirens.

Using NetGalley

[NetGalley](#) is probably the most popular ARC online system out there, and it is available for all readers over 18 to use for free. Upon signing up as a Member through this website, you'll need to provide your full name, email address, country of residence, and whether you are signing up as a bookseller, book trade professional, educator, librarian, media journalist, or reviewer (and you'll probably want to hit 'reviewer').

Register for NetGalley

Register as a Member / Reader	Publisher or Author? Contact us!
-------------------------------	----------------------------------

Login Name *

For sign in purposes only, not publicly visible

Password *

Password must be between 8 - 30 characters and contain a number.

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Country *

Member Type *

Choose what best defines you as a book advocate or industry professional. After registration, a guided walkthrough will help you complete your Profile and indicate your primary audience.

Do You Help Books Succeed?
Join NetGalley for Free!

As a book advocate or industry professional, you want to discover books to recommend to your audience — and NetGalley is here for you!

NetGalley members can request or be invited to read digital review copies of books, primarily before they are published. In the book trade, these are called "galleys" (hence our name!).

Publishers and authors make digital review copies and audiobooks available for the NetGalley community, and in exchange, members provide reviews, star ratings, industry list nominations, and more. NetGalley members are Booksellers, Book Trade Professionals, Educators, Librarians, Reviewers who promote books on social media, blogs, and consumer websites, as well as Media/Journalists who work for traditional media outlets.

Screenshot of [NetGalley's registration page](#), accessed April 2024

After your registration is complete, you'll want to fill out your profile as thoroughly as you can in order to improve your chances of being picked by authors and publishers to receive their ARCs. Make sure you write a good bio, pick what reading genres and categories you like, and add any links to your social media accounts. Think of your profile as a resume for publishers and authors to look at, and don't be afraid to "sell" yourself to them as if you were applying for a job!

Once you're ready to start signing up to receive ARCs, explore the NetGalley website and try to only request the ebooks and audiobooks you are *actually* interested in reading (and listening to). Remember, *you will be expected to leave a review* for every book you are given as an ARC, so don't overwhelm yourself with too much reading material to get through.

It's also important to note that NetGalley features a "Feedback Ratio" bar on every Member profile, and this reflects how many reviews you leave versus how many ARCs you have received. The more reviews you give out, the higher your bar percentage will be, and the more likely you will continue to get ARCs from many publishers and authors.

Using BookSirens

[BookSirens](#) is a smaller ARC platform, but it's beloved by many independent authors (including myself!), and it's a little easier to obtain ARCs through if you are just getting started on Bookstagram and BookTok. The ARCs provided by this site are ebooks, but they do have an audiobook ARC system coming soon.

Get advance reader copies (ARCs) from top publishers & authors

Read your favorite genres for free.
Share your honest review.
Grow your following.

Start Getting ARCs

Join 30.450+ happy readers...

Screenshot of [booksirens.com](#), taken April 2024

On BookSirens, you will get recommendations for books you might be interested in based on what genres you have already written reviews for on Goodreads, Amazon, and your personal blog, if you have one. Then, you will be able to choose what books you'd like to read and review, and you do have a DNF (did not finish) option that you may use sparingly if you can't get around to writing a review.

Through BookSirens, you can read and review as many books as you'd like every month, and there is no minimum requirement (such as how many reviews you write or how big your following is on social media) to stay a member on the site. Who knows, you may even find your new favorite author from the site, too!

How to Get Physical (Hardcopy) ARCs

Again, getting ARCs digitally is always going to be easier to do since they are cheaper for authors and publishers to distribute. However, that doesn't mean that requesting physical copies of ARCs is impossible.

Pretty much the only way, these days, to get hardcopies of ARCs is to request them directly through book publishers and authors. You can do this digitally through email, too, so it's really not that hard—you just need to know how to craft your message professionally and, again, how to “sell yourself” as a great book reviewer since that's what ARC distributors are looking for.

Before writing and sending out a ton of emails, though, you'll need to make sure you're sending them to the right places. This will take some research, but you can start by browsing the websites of your favorite authors and the publishing companies of your favorite authors, if they have one (you can figure out who published a book by reading the copyright page in the front). Most authors' and publishers' sites will have a contact page or contact tab somewhere that will give you an email address to send mail to, or they will provide a contact box that acts just like an internal messaging system.

Generally, I recommend *emailing authors instead of publishers* since publishers are less likely to send back a reply, and, after all... well, I *am* an author, so I may be a little biased!

As an author myself, I also love to hear from my readers through email, and, since I do not work under a publishing company, I handle all ARC requests for my books myself. This may also be the case for some of your other favorite authors, too, who independent or “indie” and do not publish through a publishing house (like Macmillan, Harper Collins, etc.).

While you do not necessarily need to be requesting a specific book when you send an email for an ARC request, it does help, especially when requesting ARCs from publishers that handle a *lot* of books. So, you'll need to do some more research and find out what upcoming books are going to be released, and then you can request an ARC for those books. Ideally, you should send out your email at least **3 months before** the book is set to release. Again, this isn't really necessary when emailing authors directly, assuming you would be interested in getting an ARC of *any* of their upcoming releases.

Now, in your ARC request email, you'll need to include some key pieces of information; otherwise, many publishers will disregard your email completely. This includes:

- Your name
- Your mailing address
- Your social media accounts (and website/blog, if you have one)
- One reason why you *should* receive an ARC

That last point is very important, too, so don't throw it out! Like we discussed above, it's very important that you sell yourself as an awesome Bookstagrammer, BookToker, book reviewer, etc. to publishers and authors in your message. Remember, ARCs are actually a two-way street—it's not just a free book for you. Instead, it's a complementary book for you in exchange for an honest, in-depth review, and publishers/authors need to be ***convinced that they can trust you to deliver that review.***

To help you out, use the following example as a template for requesting an ARC from an author or publisher. Feel free to copy, paste, and edit the email message as needed.

Dear Author Kari Lynn M.,

I came across your contact email on your website, and I wanted to inquire about any advanced reading copies you have available now or in the future. I would especially be interested in receiving an ARC of the next book in your "Emma Lenford" series, if possible!

My name is XYZ, and I am a book reviewer with an Instagram account under @XYZ. On my Instagram page, I post a new book review every week, and I focus on reviewing YA genre books just like yours! I also have a following of 3,000 and counting, and I'm sure my followers would love to hear the news about any and all of your upcoming book releases.

My mailing address is XYZ, if you would like to send a hardcopy of any ARC directly to me.

I want to thank you tremendously for considering me to join your team of ARC book reviewers!

Sincerely,
XYZ

Lastly, while you may be excited to hear back from publishers and authors, don't be disappointed if you do not. In fact, you should expect well over half of your emails to go unanswered, especially if you are sending messages to large publishing companies. And, oftentimes, most of the replies you *do* get will be something along the lines of, "Thank you for contacting us, *but...*"

Remember, though, that there are a lot of times where you have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find the prince... er, something like that.

Don't be discouraged if you do not receive any physical ARCs, though, either. Instead, keep on trying, and keep on connecting with publishers and authors!

How to Write and Post Book Reviews

Not all Bookstagram and BookTok accounts share their opinions through book reviews, but this is a great way to connect with others of the bookish community and give book recommendations. If you're new to writing and posting reviews, though, you might not know the best way to go about this.

Writing Reviews

I've actually shared a lot of posts on how to write book reviews over on [my blog](#), but I wanted to go over it again here in this book. It never hurts to hear review-writing tips, either, so don't skip this section!

First: Don't Even Think About Giving a 1-Star Review

First and foremost, I'm going to tell you something that I'm sure a lot of people think sounds ridiculous, but... you should never, ever, ever give a book a 1-star (or less) review. I've also wrote about this topic [over on my blog](#), but here's why in a nutshell.

1-star ratings and reviews often:

- Make it less likely that other readers will give a book a try
- Decrease an eBook's ranking in book searches, also making it difficult for other readers to discover it
- Lower the perceived quality of an author's overall portfolio
- Pull down an eBook's overall quality rating
- Lower an author's confidence

Most importantly, though, 1-star reviews can very much affect how many sales that book makes, and this definitely directly impacts an author's income. As an author myself, I know how this works firsthand, I just want every book critic to understand this—even giving *one book* a 1-star review ***can prevent an author from earning the money they need to live on.***

Of course, I can't tell you how to write your book reviews, but I just strongly suggest never giving out 1-star (or even 2-star) reviews out of respect for all authors. And, honestly, there really isn't ever a legit reason to give such a harsh, negative review—unless the book contains things like hate speech, discriminatory statements, etc. And, in those cases, reporting the book for inappropriate content (you can usually do this on any online retailer, like Amazon and Google Play) is going to be more beneficial than simply leaving a 1-star rating, anyway.

Now, to write a good book review, you need to *be constructive—not destructive*. Reviews that give a 1-star rating fail to be constructive in any way, so, please—just don't do it!

Now: Write Up the Reviews

Even if you don't consider yourself a writer by any means, know that you can definitely still write book reviews. It's pretty simple when you break things down, too, so follow these steps!

Step 1: Decide Where the Review Will Live

Assuming you want other people to be able to access and read your review, you should decide where you want to "publish" the review. Don't panic, though—I'm just talking about places like Goodreads, a personal blog (read more in the last section of this book for more on this), social media, or the online place where you got the book from. You can totally also post your review in multiple places; for example, posting it on your blog and sharing it through social media. Our next section, [Posting Reviews](#), will cover how to actually do this more in-depth, so don't panic about that, either!

Generally, you can post any review of any book on your own blog, social media, or on Goodreads. However, when it comes to posting your review on an online retailer's site, you should remember that some online retailers only allow users with a verified purchase of the book to post a review. Here's a list of some popular online book retailers and information on whether or not you can leave book reviews without purchasing a book through them...

- Amazon: **Yes**, with an Amazon buyer or seller account (will not show as a verified purchase)
- Apple Books: **Yes**

- Audiobooks.com: **No**
- Barnes & Noble: **Yes**
- Chirp: **No**
- Google Play: **Yes**
- Rakuten (Kobo): **Yes**, with a Walmart or Rakuten account
- Scribd: **Yes**
- Smashwords: **No**
- Spotify: **No** reviews accepted for any audiobooks, but ratings can be given by all users

Step 2: Come Up with Your Review's Main Points

Now, I don't want this to turn into a general writing course, but I do want to share this good point: *good writing, no matter the topic, needs to be purposeful.*

Basically, this just means that you need to write your book reviews with a purpose in mind. While it's fine to just leave a one-sentence "it was okay," when the review website requires you to leave a message with your rating, it's not really the most insightful review for other readers to see. On the other end of the scale, you should also restrain from leaving an endless rant of criticism because, although that kind of writing does technically have a purpose, it can also be difficult for other readers to actually read, which, ironically, can *defeat* its purpose.

So, to keep your review organized and well-thought-out, plot out all of your main points before you actually take pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard).

You can do this while you read a book, too, to save time; some readers like to flag pages in a book while they read for easy reference later. Other readers like to have a notebook or digital notepad for note-taking on-hand while they read for the same reason.

When you plot out your main points, whether its during your reading or right after, be sure to jot down the positives *and* the negatives. Remember, we want to keep things constructive, and that starts right from the “planning” stage of our review writing!

Step 3: Write, Write, Write!

Now, it’s finally time to create your book review! Have fun with it, and don’t pressure yourself to make, like, the *best* book review in history. Because, after all, it is just a book review... not a book.

To keep things completely constructive, you may also want to keep these tips in mind:

- Balance the positive with the negative, and give light to both sides, even if you believe a book is 100% amazing or 100% awful... because, 10 times out of 10, it’s not 100% anything.
- Focus on the book, not the author, though it is fine to mention the author’s other works, too.
- Give “feedback” as necessary by explaining points of the book that could have been executed differently.
- Be specific, and don’t say a piece of the book was great or terrible without specific examples.
- Use “I” statements, and remember that your review is a reflection of your opinions-not everyone will agree with you, and that’s okay.

Need some more help writing your book reviews? Try out my **free digital/printable book review guide!** Included are 4 pages with prompts, questions, and plenty of writing space to get you reviewing books faster and easier. Also included is a book review tracker so that you can remind yourself to write reviews for every book you read.



[Download the Book Review Guide Now](#)

If you still have trouble writing your review, you can also ask yourself some questions related to the book, which should prompt some good answers.

Some of these questions may include:

- What was your favorite scene in this book? Your least favorite?
- Did you “get along” with the main character? Why or why not?
- Was this book difficult to finish, or did you race through to the end of it?
- Was the ending of this book a surprise, or did you expect it to end as it did? Did the ending satisfy you?
- Do you believe this book is “overrated” or “underrated”?
- Would you ever reread this book? Do you think you would read it differently the next time?

These are just a few sample prompt questions, too, and you could certainly find more out there, especially if you Google something like “book discussion questions.”

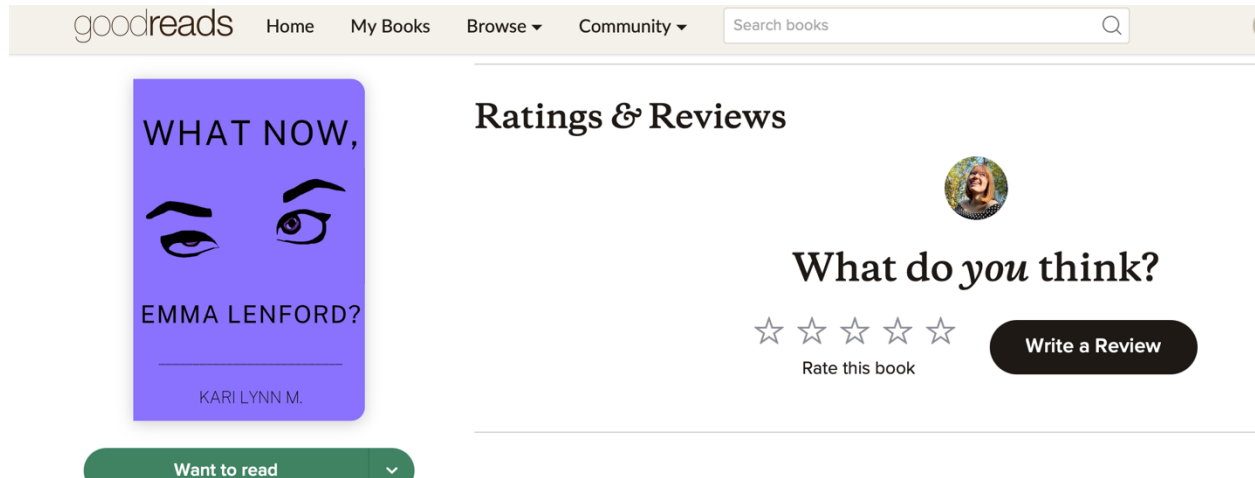
Posting Reviews

Now, assuming you’ve got a great book review written up and ready to “publish” for the world to see, you’ll want to re-visit Step 1 of the previous section. ***Recall how you wanted to share your review***, and then follow along here to get it posted online.

Sharing Reviews on Book Retailer Sites and Goodreads

Remember, only certain book retailer sites let you post a review, and most allow you to only post a review after purchasing the book through that site. [Refer back to our list](#) to see if the place where you got your book allows you to post a review.

[Goodreads](#) is another great place to post your book reviews since it doesn’t matter where you bought or got the book from—you just need to find the book on the Goodreads site to leave your review. If you’re new to Goodreads, you should check it out, too—it’s a mega-site for the book community, and it comes with features that help you track what books are in your TBR lists!



Screenshot of a review option on Goodreads.com, taken April 2024

If you want to post your book review to multiple sites (for example, Amazon and Goodreads), you should be able to copy and paste your review from one site to the next—*no need to write or re-write a different review for each site.*

Sharing Reviews on Social Media

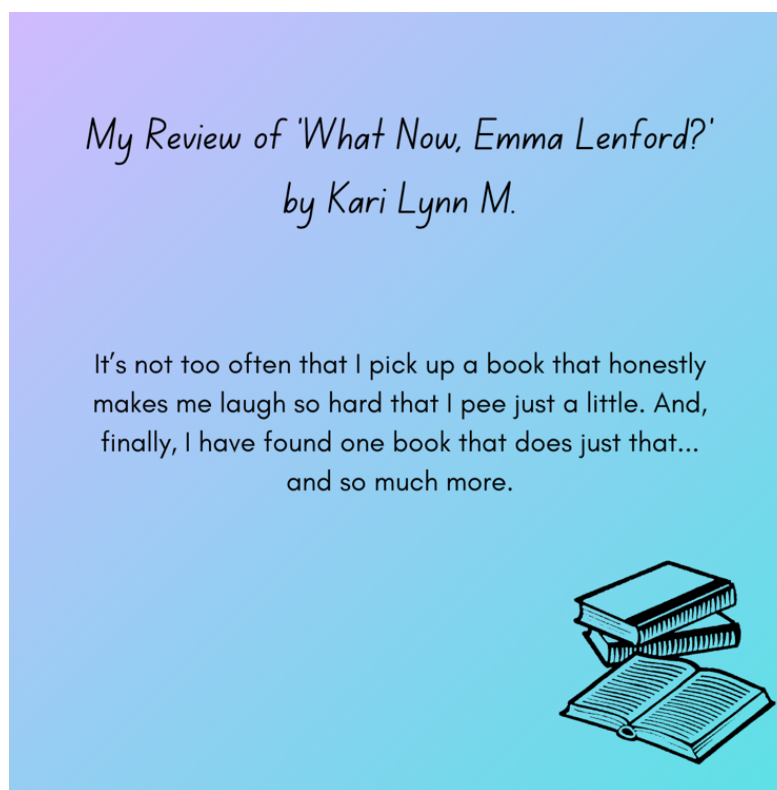
One of my favorite ways to hear about book reviews, honestly, is through videos on BookTok. You need to get a little creative with how you share your reviews on TikTok, though, since you'll need to turn your written review into a video post. Here's a couple of tips to help you do this:

- Record multiple shots of the book being reviewed (without sound) to use as the main content for the video
 - Include the book cover
 - If you have a hard copy of the book, take some more shots of the book's pages (for example, flipping through the pages, zooming in/out on a favorite quote, etc.)
 - If you have a digital copy of the book, take some more shots of the digital pages (for example, scrolling)
- Add your book review through voiceover editing
 - Add automatic captions to keep your video engaging for your audience
- Highlight your review's main points with added pop-up captions over your video
- Summarize your review in the video description
- View book review videos shared by others on BookTok for more inspiration

All of these video-taking tips can also apply to videos on Instagram Reels, and you can even re-post the videos you share on TikTok over on Instagram, too, if you'd like. For sharing a book review on Instagram with a photo-based post, things can be a little bit more tricky, though, since you only have so much space to write in the photo's description box. However, it can be done!

One way to share your book review on Bookstagram is with a "visual version" of your review in a photo. For example, using the information we discussed in the [Posting Digitally-Created Photos](#) section, you can copy and paste the text of your book review onto any photo background of your choice. For longer reviews, you can break up the text of your review into multiple sections that can be placed onto multiple photos—remember, on Instagram, you can post up to 10 photos in a single post, so you don't have to put your entire book review in one picture.

I recommend keeping your "background" simple when you post any text-based photo, book reviews included. The background doesn't just have to be one color, though—you can also experiment with an ombre background or the addition of a book-shaped graphic.



An example of a text-based post with the introduction photo for a full review; typically, you would add more photos (up to 10) with more paragraphs from your review to the rest of your post

If creating digitally photos still isn't your thing—that's okay. You can also always snap a photo of the book you are reviewing and just copy and paste your book review directly into the photo description. Keep in mind, though, that your entire review may not fit in the description, and you may need to edit things down or just summarize some points.

Sharing Reviews on a Personal Blog/Website

A lot of readers shy away from creating a personal blog or website because they just find it too daunting. And, while there is certainly a lot of work that goes into making a blog or website, it's always worth it—trust me on that one.

For one, creating a personal blog gives you a place to post and share absolutely all of your book reviews. You can also add social “share” buttons to your reviews so that other readers can share the link to your review on their own social media accounts.

Whenever you post a book review to your personal blog/website, I recommend also posting a link to your full review on all of your social accounts, Bookstagram and BookTok included. For either of these sites, you won't be able to post the link to your website directly in your post or in the post's description—instead, you'll want to do a “link in bio” adlib and add the link to your review in your bio description.

Note:

For most social media accounts, including TikTok, you may need to have a “business” account to add a link to your bio. Keep this in mind before you start directing followers to check the link in your bio and consider making the switch from a personal social media account to a business account (it's usually easy to do with one or two steps!).

Creating a Bookish Blog/Website

So, creating a book blog certainly can be a long, intensive process... and, honestly, going into things completely in-depth may require a whole book on its own (maybe I will do this in the future, though, so stay tuned!). However, I just want to share the simplified version of the main steps it takes to create a bookish blog that you can pair with your Bookstagram and BookTok accounts!

Step 1: Choose a Website Platform

There are a lot of website-hosting platforms out there today, so you really need to do your research before committing to one. You'll also want to decide if you want to start out with creating a website/blog for free or if you are willing to pay money to one of these hosting platforms to get started. I recommend starting with a free blog because it allows you to experiment and learn about blogging without a giant bill hanging over your head. Later on, you can always upgrade your blog to a paid version, too, so don't feel like you have to be stuck with a free version for life!

The following list describes some of the most popular hosting platforms for book bloggers—*and whether or not they offer a free hosting option* to get you started.

- Wordpress – Yes
- Blogger – Yes
- Bluehost – No
- GoDaddy – No
- Wix – Yes
- Squarespace – No

Step 2: Create Your Domain Name

Remember when we had to choose the perfect name for your Bookstagram and BookTok accounts? Yeah, the same thing applies to your book blog website!

Ideally, your Bookstagram and BookTok account @ handles should match your website domain name. Remember—a domain is the XYZ part of “www.XYZ.com.” However, your @ handles may already be taken as domain names, so you may have

to come up with a new name (but keep it as similar as possible—that’s how you start “branding” yourself!).

Depending on whether you have opted for a free or paid version of your website host, you may be limited on what your full domain name will look like, too. For example, free sites offered through Wordpress will require you to have “.wordpress” somewhere in your domain name; it will probably look something like “www.mybookblog.wordpress.com.” If you would rather have a fully custom domain name, that’s where paying for a website “upgrade” through your website host may come into play (for example, to get your name to just be “www.mybookblog.com”).

When you work with your website host to setup your book blog/website, you’ll be able to tell if a website domain name you want is available or not—it will tell you. If, for some reason, the domain you want is already taken, you can tweak it slightly to still keep it in some form. For example, if your Bookstagram handle is @RitasRomanstasy, but the domain name “www.RitasRomantasy.com” is taken, you can try for something like “www.RitaReadsRomantasy.com” instead. Don’t be afraid to get creative with it!

When choosing your domain name, you don’t have to use the traditional “.com” suffix, either. Depending on your website host, you may also be able to use extensions like “.blog,” “.net,” or even “.love.”

Step 3: Go with a Template

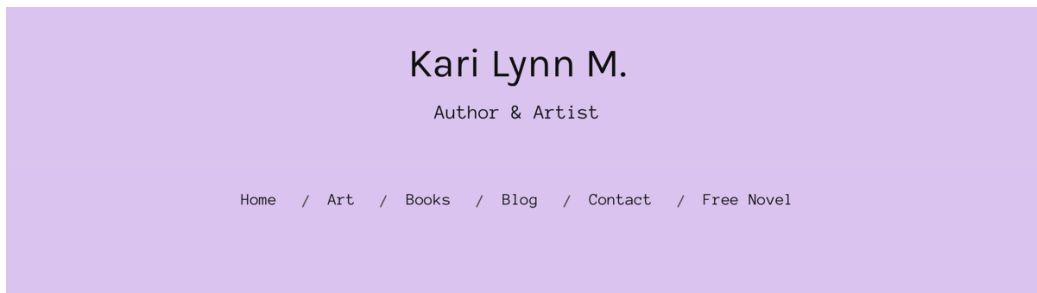
Basically all website hosting platforms offer hundreds to thousands of website and blog templates for you to use, and using a template will, literally, make your life so much easier.

For a book blog, I recommend browsing any blog-related templates available to you. Note that some website hosts may require you to pay extra for certain templates, so try to stick to ones that are simple and free to use. Remember, too, that everything in a template is editable, so you can totally turn a template made for, say, food blogging into your own book blogging site.

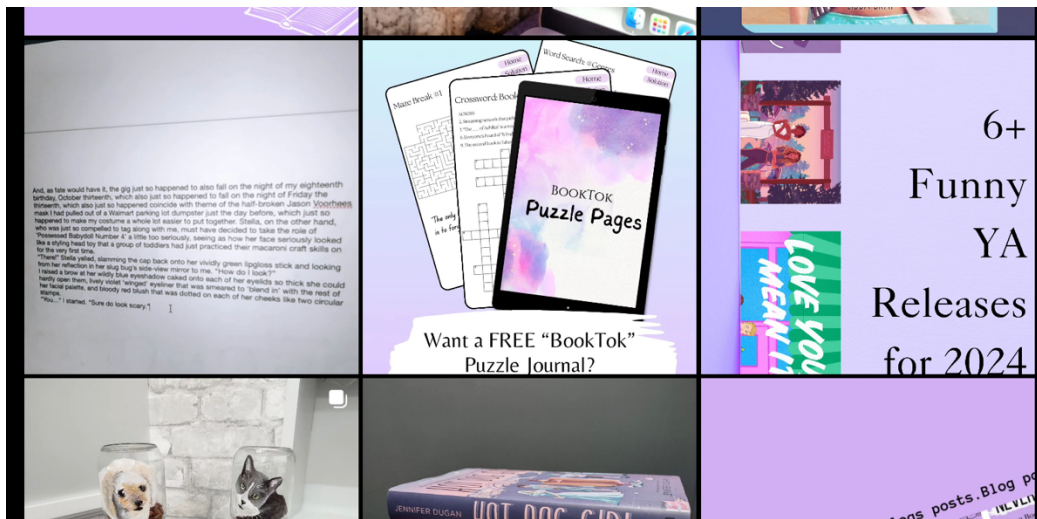
Once you settle on a template, you should think about *picking a color scheme* for your site, unless the template comes with its own colors that you already like. Using color is another great way to “brand” yourself, so go with at least one main color that

represents you. Make this color the background of your website, if you can, and plan on using it often in any photos you add to your blog and your social media sites.

For example, I like to “brand” myself with my favorite color—light purple. I use this color as the background of my own website and blog, and I like to incorporate it into as many images I put on my website and my social media as I can. This not only ties everything together in a way that is visually appealing, but it also helps my website and social media followers to easily recognize me—they will always associate the light purple color with me!



Images above and below: screenshots of the header from my own website, KariLynnM.com, and previous Instagram profile feed as examples of branding with a purple color palette



Step 4: Build Your Site

Now, this is the part that may take quite some time to accomplish—so don't rush to try to get it all done in one day.

Building up your site by adding information is important to making your website what we like to call “user-friendly.” Again, we could discuss this for days on end in another book, but, in short, just know that this means building your website *with your end users in mind* (like your Bookstagram and BookTok followers, for example).

I also recommend looking at some other book websites and blogs to see what information they have included on their sites, then trying to incorporate some of those things into your own site.

Here are some examples of things you may want to pay attention to:

- What all is included on their homepages
- Whether or not they include “About” pages
- Whether or not they include “Contact” pages
- Whether or not they feature sidebars (blocks of extra information on the side of certain webpages; usually on the right-hand side)

With the template you have chosen, you may already have an “About” or “Contact” page ready for you to edit and work with. If not, consider adding these pages, and look at other websites for inspiration as to what you *should* put on those pages.

For your homepage, you will have a lot of room to experiment with. Don’t overwhelm yourself by trying to add as much information to it as possible at once, though. Instead, try to add just a handful of the following sections to your homepage.

- A quick “about me” blurb
- A photo of yourself
- A photo or two of your bookshelf (or book piles!)
- An overview of your book review standards (how you rate books)
- A blurb of your favorite books, genres, and/or authors
- A photo of your current or latest read

Some website platforms also allow you to set your homepage as a blog feed page. This is totally fine, too—but I recommend adding a sidebar to your homepage if you do decide to do this. That way, you still have some information on your front page, other than just an overview of your latest blog posts. Again, a sidebar is a bar of information along the side of one or more of your website pages, and it can include

any information you'd like—ranging from a short bio about yourself or some photos of the books in your TBR stack.



ON [APRIL 8, 2024](#) / BY [KARI LYNN M](#) / IN [FOR THE READERS!](#)
/ [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Guys, I think I'm finally doing it... I'm reading more than two books a year! Even if they are audiobooks... but, hey, I do what I can. My latest audiobook read was *Not Here to Be Liked*... and, yeah, I felt mixed on this one, which seems to be becoming my norm these days. Oh, ...

[CONTINUE READING →](#)



Hey there! I'm Kari, a self-published author/independent artist/amateur cake decorator/freelance writer and creator with a dream. The dream of sharing stories with as many people I can possibly reach... and having an abundant supply of white chocolate truffles. And that's pretty much me!

An example of what a sidebar may look like, using the short bio blurb from the sidebar on my own website's [blog reel page](#)

Step 5: Start Blogging... and Sharing Your Blog

Once your website is fully up and running, you'll be ready to start writing blog posts!

Of course, the topics of your blog posts can range greatly, but, if you're stuck on where to start, here are some great blog post ideas for book bloggers:

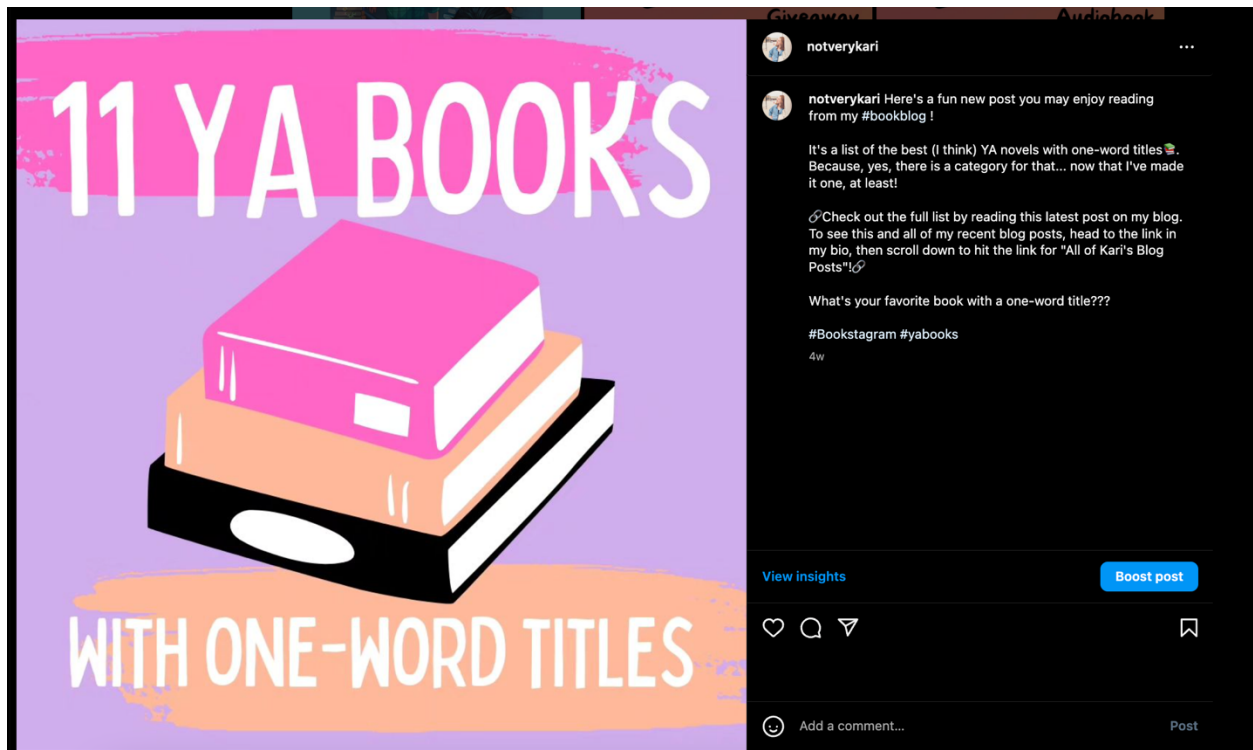
- Compilations of great book quotes
- Lists of upcoming book releases in your favorite genre
- Book recommendations for readers who like a certain movie or TV show
- "Signs" that someone may like a certain genre
- And, of course, [book reviews!](#)

Likely, you will run out of blog post ideas at some point in your blogging journey. Don't worry, though, it happens to all of us! For more inspiration, you can always look to other book bloggers—just don't ever copy their ideas.

Another way to come up with blog ideas is to look through your past social media posts on Bookstagram and BookTok. Many times, you can elaborate on a previous post over on your blog since, with a blog, you have an unlimited amount of space to get all your thoughts out.

After publishing any blog post, you should also share it back over to your social media sites. Let your followers know about your blog and encourage them to read what you have to say!

Perhaps the best (and easiest) way to share a blog post to your social channels is by sharing a simple photo that relates to the blog post and including a quick summary of your blog post in the description/caption of the photo. You'll also want to let your followers know that they should read your blog to hear more, and you can direct them to check out your blog by visiting the link in your bio. You'll also want to make sure, then, that your bio link does connect with your blog site (you can either make the main link in your bio your website link, or you can use a service like Linktree to share your website along with multiple other links).



An example of how I chose to share a blog post from my own website over on Instagram (edited)

Stay in Touch

Again, thank you so much for downloading and using this Bookstagram and BookTok guide! We hope you found this guide *useful, informative*, and maybe even *entertaining*... a lot like how our social media posts *should be*, right?

To stay in touch with the author who brought you this guide, Kari Lynn M., give her a follow on [Bookstagram](#) and [Booktok](#). You can also contact her directly by using this [form here](#) or by sending an email anytime to hey@KariLynnM.com.

Feel free to share this guide with others on social media, and happy reading!