

## Goodreads' Q1 and Q2 2024 Terms of Service Report to California's Attorney General

### **Overview**

Goodreads' mission is to help readers discover books they love and get more out of reading. Among other things, Goodreads community members can track the books they're reading, have read, and want to read; receive personalized book recommendations tailored to their literary tastes; and find out if a book is a good fit based on community members' reviews. Goodreads' goal is to keep Goodreads a welcoming place where people can come together to share reviews, participate in discussions, and enjoy interacting with readers and authors.

### **Our Terms of Service**

Goodreads' current terms of service are in the Appendix to this report and available at: [Terms of Use](#), [Community Guidelines](#), and [Review Guidelines](#). No changes have been made since the previous report. Goodreads currently makes its terms of service available in English, which is the only language in which it offers product features on its site. Users who access Goodreads through handheld devices may change their language settings to view Goodreads features, such as menus and prompts, in the following languages: Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish (Android and Kindle E-Readers), as well as Nederlands and Russian (Kindle E-Readers only).

### **Our Approach to Moderation**

Goodreads is committed to ensuring reviews are trustworthy, relevant and authentic for readers and authors. For that reason, Goodreads welcomes a wide variety of reviews—whether positive or negative—but prohibits reviews that violate its guidelines, including reviews that harass readers or authors, or that contain hate speech. Goodreads' terms of service do not define the categories of content listed in 22677(a)(3), but do explicitly address hate speech and harassment. Content falling into the other categories identified in 22677(a)(3) may violate one or more of Goodreads' existing guidelines, such as prohibitions on users misrepresenting their identity, spamming or scamming, abusing Goodreads' rating system, or using Goodreads to promote a user or their product.

Goodreads relies on a combination of human and automated review to prevent content that violates its terms from appearing on its site. Generally, Goodreads conducts manual review prior to taking action. Goodreads users, including employees, are able to flag content that might violate Goodreads' guidelines and are also able to contact Goodreads via a [contact us form](#) to report any potentially violative content.

Goodreads investigates each report and takes action on content and/or accounts that violate Goodreads policies. The specific enforcement action taken depends on the content type, type of violation, and the reported user's previous history of violations. If Goodreads determines that a piece of content is in violation of its terms, a Goodreads team member will take action by removing or demoting the content. Goodreads may also warn, suspend, or ban a user who posted the violative content.

### **Q1 and Q2 2024 Activity**

In Q1 and Q2 2024, 14,870 items of content were flagged for harassment (1 author, 10 author blog posts, 3,433 comments, 6 community answers, 99 community questions, 1 friend request, 9 groups, 10 messages, 2 quotes, 8,803 reviews, 2,480 users, and 16 user statuses) and 8,978 items of content were flagged for hate speech (15 author blog posts, 1,928 comments, 4 community answers, 18 community questions, 4 groups, 3 messages, 4 photos, 5,645 reviews, 1,343 users, 12 user statuses, and 2 quotes), totaling 23,848 items of content. Of the items flagged, 2,283 were actioned, i.e., removed from the site: 1,855 for harassment (3 author blog posts, 664 comments, 43 community questions, 1 group, 5 messages, 1,114 reviews, 24 users, and 1 user status) and 428 for hate speech (204 comments, 12

community questions, 210 reviews, 1 user, and 1 quote). 234 items of content actioned for harassment and 88 items of content actioned for hate speech also resulted in action taken against the user who posted the content. 1,018 items of content were flagged and actioned (i.e., removed) by Goodreads employees (harassment: 3 author blog posts, 298 comments, 648 reviews, 1 user, 1 user status; hate speech: 23 comments, 44 reviews), and the remainder were flagged by users. No members requested a reassessment of their content. We provide the number of views for pages with actioned content, but the number of page views overstates the number of times the actioned content was viewed because content from users typically appears near the bottom of the page, requiring users to scroll to see it. For Q1 and Q2 2024, actioned content appeared on pages that were viewed 14.6M times.

## Appendix

### **Terms of Use**

This Agreement was last revised on April 28, 2021.

Welcome to Goodreads.com, the website and online service of Goodreads LLC (together with its affiliates, "Goodreads" "we," or "us"). This page explains the terms by which you may use our service. By accessing or using the Goodreads services, website and software provided through or in connection with the service ("Service"), you agree on behalf of yourself and all members of your household and others who use this Service under your account ("you" or "your") to be bound by this Terms of Use Agreement, the Goodreads Privacy Policy, the [Amazon.com Conditions of Use](#), and the other applicable rules, policies and terms posted on the Goodreads.com website or provided with the Service (collectively, this "Agreement"), whether or not you are a registered user of our Service.

We reserve the right to amend this Agreement at any time in our sole discretion by posting the revised Agreement on the Goodreads.com website. Your continued use of the Service after any such changes constitutes your acceptance of the revised Agreement. This Agreement applies to all visitors, users, and others who access the Service ("Users").

#### 1. Use of Our Service

Goodreads provides a place for you to discover, track, and talk about books with friends and our community.

You do not have to register in order to visit Goodreads. To access certain features of the Service, though, including creating "bookshelves" to organize what you've read, posting book reviews, and commenting on other members' reviews, you will need to register with Goodreads and create a "Member" account. Your account gives you access to the services and functionality that we may establish and maintain from time to time and in our sole discretion.

You may never use another Member's account without permission. You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of your account and password and for restricting access to your account, and you agree to accept responsibility for all activities that occur under your account or password. You agree to notify Goodreads immediately of any breach of security or unauthorized use of your account.

You may change the settings on your My Account page to control your profile and how other members communicate with you. By providing Goodreads your email address you consent to our using the email address in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

Subject to your compliance with this Agreement and your payment of any applicable fees, we grant you a limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, non-sublicensable license to access and make personal and non-commercial use of the Service. This license does not include any resale or commercial use of any part of the Service, or its contents; any collection and use of any book listings, descriptions, reviews or other material included in the Service; any derivative use of any part of the Service or its contents; any downloading, copying, or other use of account information for the benefit of any third party; or any use of data mining, robots, or similar data gathering and extraction tools. All rights not expressly granted to

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In order to protect our Members from unsolicited advertising or solicitation, Goodreads reserves the right to restrict the number of communications that a Member may send to other Members in any 24-hour period to a number that Goodreads deems appropriate in its sole discretion.

Goodreads may permanently or temporarily terminate, suspend, or otherwise refuse to permit your access to the Service without notice and liability for any reason, including if in Goodreads' sole determination you violate any provision of this Agreement, or for no reason. Upon termination for any reason or no reason, you continue to be bound by this Agreement.

The Service is subject to scheduled and unscheduled service interruptions. All aspects of the Service are subject to change or elimination at Goodreads's sole discretion. You agree that Goodreads will not be liable to you for any interruption of the Service, delay or failure to perform.

You are solely responsible for your interactions with other Goodreads Users. We reserve the right, but have no obligation, to monitor disputes between you and other Users. Goodreads shall have no liability for your interactions with other Users, or for any User's action or inaction.

## 2. User Content

Some areas of the Service may allow Users to upload, publish, display, link to or otherwise make available (hereinafter, "post") reviews, comments, questions, highlights, and other information including Users' names, voices and likenesses ("User Content"). You are solely responsible for your User Content. You agree not to post User Content that is illegal, obscene, threatening, defamatory, invasive of privacy, infringing of intellectual property rights (including publicity rights), or otherwise injurious to third parties or objectionable, and does not consist of or contain software viruses, political campaigning, commercial solicitation, chain letters, mass mailings, or any form of "spam" or unsolicited commercial electronic messages. You may not use a false e-mail address, impersonate any person or entity, or otherwise mislead as to the origin of content. You hereby represent that you are the owner of all the copyright rights with respect to, or that you have the legal right to post, your User Content, and that you have the power to grant the license granted below. Goodreads reserves the right to monitor, reject and/or remove any User Content at any time. For example, Goodreads may, but is not obligated to, reject and/or remove any User Content that Goodreads believes, in its sole discretion, violates these provisions.

Goodreads takes no responsibility and assumes no liability for any User Content that you or any other Users or third parties post or send over the Service. You understand and agree that any loss or damage of any kind that occurs as a result of the use of any User Content that you post is solely your

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### 3. License Grant

By posting any User Content on the Service, you expressly grant to Goodreads a nonexclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, and fully sublicensable right to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, perform, translate, create derivative works from, distribute, and display such content throughout the world in any media. You represent and warrant that you own or otherwise control all of the rights to the content that you post; that the content is accurate; that use of the content you supply does not violate this policy and will not cause injury to any person or entity; and that you will indemnify Goodreads for all claims resulting from content you supply. If you submit User Content via the “My Writing” or “Ebook” features, our [Terms of Use for Writers](#) apply to that User Content.

### 4. Our Proprietary Rights

Except for your User Content, the Service and all materials therein or transferred thereby, including, without limitation, software, images, text, graphics, illustrations, logos, patents, trademarks, service marks, copyrights, photographs, audio, videos, music, and User Content (the "Goodreads Content"), and all intellectual property Rights related thereto, are the exclusive property of Goodreads and its licensors. Except as explicitly provided herein, nothing in this Agreement shall be deemed to create a license in or under any such intellectual property Rights, and you agree not to sell, license, rent, modify, distribute, copy, reproduce, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, publish, adapt, edit or create derivative works from any materials or content accessible on the Service. Use of the Goodreads Content or materials on the Service for any purpose not expressly permitted by this Agreement is strictly prohibited.

You may choose to or we may invite you to submit comments or ideas about the Service, including without limitation about how to improve the Service or our products ("Ideas"). By submitting any Idea, you agree that your disclosure is gratuitous, unsolicited and without restriction and will not place Goodreads under any fiduciary or other obligation, and that we are free to use the Idea without any additional compensation to you, and/or to disclose the Idea on a non-confidential basis or otherwise to anyone. You further acknowledge that, by acceptance of your submission, Goodreads does not waive any rights to use similar or related ideas previously known to Goodreads, or developed by its employees, or obtained from sources other than you.

### 5. Eligibility

This Service is intended solely for Users who are thirteen (13) years of age or older, and any registration, use or access to the Service by anyone under 13 is unauthorized, unlicensed, and in violation of this Agreement. If you are under 18 years of age you may use the Service only if you either are an emancipated minor or possess legal parental or guardian consent, and are fully able and competent to enter into the terms, conditions, obligations, affirmations, representations, and warranties set forth in this Agreement, and to abide by and comply with this Agreement.

## 6. Paid Services

**Billing Policies.** Certain aspects of the Service may be provided for a fee or other charge. These fees and charges, if any, are described on the website. If you elect to use paid aspects of the Service, you agree to the pricing, payment and billing policies applicable to such fees and charges, posted at the website. Goodreads may add new services for additional fees and charges, or amend fees and charges for existing services, at any time in its sole discretion.

**No Refunds.** You may cancel your Goodreads Account at any time; however, there are no refunds for cancellation. As permitted under the terms of this Agreement, Goodreads has the right at any time for any reason or no reason to suspend or terminate your Account, terminate this Agreement, and/or refuse any and all current or future use of the Service without notice, refund, obligation, or liability to you. In the event that Goodreads suspends or terminates your Goodreads Account or this Agreement, you understand and agree that you shall receive no refund or exchange for any unused time on a subscription, any license or subscription fees for any portion of the Service, any content or data associated with your Goodreads Account, or for anything else. You acknowledge that Goodreads has the perpetual and irrevocable right to delete any or all of your content and data from Goodreads's servers and from the Service, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and for any reason or no reason, without any liability of any kind to you or any other party.

## 7. Copyright Complaints

If you believe that your copyrighted work has been copied in a way that constitutes copyright infringement and is accessible via the Service, please send us the following information:

1. An electronic or physical signature of a person authorized to act on behalf of the copyright owner;
2. A description of the copyrighted work that you claim has been infringed upon;
3. A description of the material that is claimed to be infringing and where it is located on the Service;
4. Your address, telephone number, and e-mail address;
5. A statement that you have a good faith belief that use of the material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or law; and
6. A statement, made under penalty of perjury, that the above information is accurate, and that you are the copyright owner or are authorized to act on behalf of the owner.

Goodreads' Copyright Agent for notice of claims of copyright infringement on its site can be reached as follows:

Copyright Agent

Attn: DMCA Notice

Goodreads LLC

188 Spear Street, Suite 250, San Francisco, CA 94105

Email: [copyright@goodreads.com](mailto:copyright@goodreads.com)

Telephone: (415) 373-1500

Please note that this procedure is exclusively for notifying Goodreads and its affiliates that your copyrighted material has been infringed.

## 8. Third-Party Websites, Advertisers or Services

Goodreads may contain links to third-party websites, advertisers, or services that are not owned or controlled by Goodreads. Goodreads has no control over, and assumes no responsibility for, the content, privacy policies, or practices of any third party websites or services. If you access a third party website from Goodreads, you do so at your own risk, and you understand that this Agreement and Goodreads' Privacy Policy do not apply to your use of such sites. You expressly relieve Goodreads from any and all liability arising from your use of any third-party website or services or third party owned content.

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We encourage you to be aware of when you leave the Service, and to read the terms and conditions and privacy policy of any third-party website or service that you visit.

## 9. Indemnity

You agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless Goodreads and its subsidiaries, agents, managers, and other affiliated companies, and their employees, contractors, agents, officers and directors, from and against any and all claims, damages, obligations, losses, liabilities, costs or debt, and expenses (including but not limited to attorney's fees) arising from: (i) your use of and access to the Service, including any data or content transmitted or received by you; (ii) your violation of any term of this Agreement, including without limitation your breach of any of the representations and warranties above; (iii) your violation of any third-party right, including without limitation any right of privacy, publicity rights or intellectual property rights; (iv) your violation of any law, rule or regulation of the United States or any other country; (v) any claim or damages that arise as a result of any of your User Content or any that are submitted via your account; or (vi) any other party's access and use of the Service with your unique username, password or other appropriate security code.

## 10. Disclaimers of Warranties and Limitation of Liability

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Please [contact us](#) with any questions regarding this Agreement.



## Community Guidelines

Our Community Guidelines are intended to provide clarity on interactions with all of Goodreads' features and services. Our goal is to keep Goodreads a welcoming place where people can come together to share reviews, participate in discussions, and enjoy interacting with readers and authors. We appreciate all that you contribute to the Goodreads community. Thanks for being a part of it!

### COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Goodreads is a community where you can discuss exactly what brought you here in the first place—books! Our goal is to help you find and share the books you love. We do that in part by maintaining a welcoming space with the help of all our members. These guidelines apply to all areas of community interaction, and by using Goodreads you agree to abide by them.

- We want you to have the best possible experience on Goodreads. The Goodreads community is diverse and passionate. Not everyone shares the same point of view, and that diversity of opinion is what makes Goodreads a great place to share your ideas. Respectful, lively debates are encouraged, but consider the impact of your contributions on individuals and the community as a whole before jumping in.
- Hate speech, bigotry, threats, and ad hominem attacks are not tolerated. Criticizing the opinions of others is permitted, but attacking individuals for their opinions is not.
- You should communicate openly with other members, but spam and self-promotional content are prohibited. Abusing Goodreads features to promote yourself or your product detracts from the experience of others *and* breaks our rules. (Authors can check out [Author Guidelines](#) for specific information on how to interact with readers and use Goodreads.)
- We support original, creative contributions to Goodreads. Where you can add content, go for it. Just make sure it belongs to *you*—plagiarism and copyright infringement are not allowed.
- You are welcome to post images, but images containing nudity, sexually-explicit content, or graphic violence are not allowed.
- Bring your authentic self to Goodreads. Please don't misrepresent your identity or create accounts to harass other members, abuse features, or evade our rules. Spammers and scammers are not welcome.
- Artificially inflating or deflating a book's ratings or reputation violates our rules. This includes activity like creating fake accounts to manipulate book ratings, purchasing reviews, and incentivizing votes, likes, or other actions on Goodreads. It's not just that we don't tolerate this; this kind of behavior ultimately diminishes the community's trust in *you*.
- If you see content that breaks our rules, [report it](#) or [contact us](#). Don't take it upon yourself to correct other people's bad behavior, and don't encourage bad behavior by

acknowledging it. Staff members evaluate each flagged item, typically within 72 hours, and take action to educate members about our rules. If a conversation is deteriorating, you can opt to disengage.

Simply put, add value to the community—don't diminish it. If you're here because you adore books *and* you make it your business to treat others with respect, then welcome to your literary home!

Here are a few disclaimers:

- Goodreads reserves the right to remove content at any time for any reason. It is at our sole discretion to decide when content violates our guidelines.
- The content posted on Goodreads contains individual and subjective opinions. The opinions expressed are those of Goodreads members and not of Goodreads. We do not endorse any of the opinions expressed by members.

For additional information about community interaction in groups, please refer to our [Group Moderator Guidelines](#).

## Review Guidelines

Goodreads has some of the best book reviews anywhere. Our members are passionate, knowledgeable readers, and their contributions to the site are what make it such a vibrant and fun place. These guidelines are presented to help make sure Goodreads' reviews remain the best and most authentic in the world.

### OUR REVIEW PHILOSOPHY

Goodreads is for expressing your honest opinions about books. Don't be afraid to say what you think about the book! We welcome your passion, as it helps the millions of other readers on Goodreads learn what a book is really about, and decide whether or not they want to read it.

We believe that Goodreads members should see the best, most relevant, thought-provoking reviews (positive and negative) when they visit a book page. Our job is to show members those reviews, and not show reviews that we deem to not be appropriate or a high enough level of quality.

However we value that members trust us with your thoughts and words and take our stewardship of storing your reviews seriously. We promise to always store your reviews on your profile and in your bookshelves and will never delete or modify them – except for certain extreme situations, which are described below. Your thoughts and your words are yours, and we promise you we will always respect that.

Here are some examples of what we allow in reviews:

- Creativity! Some of the best reviews on Goodreads use the book as inspiration for a personal essay or other piece of creative writing. As long as they don't go against our guidelines in other ways, these reviews are welcome and encouraged!
- Images in reviews are fine (and sometimes hilarious) but please, no nudity or graphic violence.
- Pre-publication reviews. Many of our members receive advance copies of books to review, either through Goodreads giveaways or another source. We have no way of knowing the exact date that review copies are available. As such, each book is eligible to be reviewed as soon as it appears on the site.

And here are some of the things that might cause your review to receive a lower priority in our internal ranking system, which may affect whether or not your review appears on the book page:

- Reviews of the author. Mentioning the author in the context of a review is always acceptable, but reviews that are predominantly about an author's behavior and not about the book may be deleted.
- Reviews with off-topic, irrelevant comments about the author's personal life will be deleted. For example, if the author owes you money, that is not appropriate information for a book review, and it will be deleted entirely.

- We will not tolerate abuse of our ratings system, such as rating the same work more than once for the purpose of inflating or deflating the book's average rating. Multiple ratings we determine to be abusive will be removed.
- Reviews that attack other reviewers will be deleted. Statements like "Other reviews have said this book is terrible, but I disagree" are fine, but if the primary purpose of your review is to mock or harass another Goodreads member, we may give it a lower priority or delete it entirely.
- Reviews must be your own original content. Reviews that plagiarize from another source or use copyrighted material without permission will be deleted.
- Self-promotional reviews will be deleted. (i.e., "I'm an author writing about Rome. This book is terrible. For a real history of Rome, check out my new book.").
- Full reviews that link to a blog are acceptable, as long as the blog is not selling a competing book and using the review to denigrate the book being reviewed in favor of its own.
- Reviews that are harassing or threatening, or that contain hate speech or bigotry. These will be deleted outright and anyone posting them risks being removed from the site.
- Spam reviews. These will be deleted immediately.
- Commercial reviews are not allowed and will be deleted. If you received a free copy of the book, you are required to disclose that in your review.

And here are a couple of disclaimers:

- Goodreads reserves the right to remove a review at any time for any reason. It is at our sole discretion and no one else's, that we decide when a review is against our guidelines.
- The reviews posted on Goodreads are individual and subjective opinions. The opinions expressed in reviews are those of Goodreads members and not of Goodreads, Inc. We do not endorse any of the opinions expressed by reviewers.
- If we detect unusual reviewing behavior on a book, we might temporarily limit the ability to submit ratings and reviews.