Schema for Review Pages

Which types and properties a review page actually needs, which ones from a 2023 plan no longer apply, and how to write editorial review markup that holds up.

Teaching series · Lesson 4 · intermediate

WHAT CORRECT REVIEW MARKUP CAN MAKE POSSIBLE



Illustrative result. Rich results are **never guaranteed**, even with valid markup.

45	11	1
minutes	2023 items rechecked	audit exercise

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Before you start

What this lesson covers

In 2023 I wrote a schema plan for a set of poker review pages. Rereading it in 2026 is a good lesson in itself: **some items were right, some never existed, and some Google has since retired.**

By the end of this lesson you can

- Say what review markup **can and can't** do, without overclaiming.
- Choose the right **itemReviewed** type for what you're reviewing.
- Separate real schema.org **types and properties** from invented ones.
- Know the review rules that catch people out: **self-serving reviews**, visible content and authorship.
- Write valid **editorial review** JSON-LD with pros and cons.

Before this lesson

Lessons 2 and 3. You should be comfortable reading **JSON-LD** and know that every key must be a defined schema.org property.

How to use it

Read Parts 1 to 5, audit a real page in the **exercise on page 8**, then take the **quiz on page 9**.

Part 1

What review markup does, and doesn’t

My 2023 deck listed four benefits: visibility, rich snippets, trust and user experience.
Two hold up. Two need rewording.

2023 claim	Still true?	How I'd say it now
Helps search engines understand the page	**Yes**	Google says it uses structured data to understand page content. [1]
Enables rich snippets like stars	**Partly**	It makes a page **eligible**. Google decides whether to show them. [2]
Establishes trust and credibility	**No**	Markup describes trust signals; it **doesn't create** them. The review itself has to be credible.
Improves user experience	**Indirectly**	Only when it leads to a clearer, accurate result. The page experience is unchanged.

The honest pitch

“Review markup tells search engines **what was reviewed, by whom, and how it was rated**, so the page is eligible for review features. It doesn't guarantee them, and it can't make a weak review strong.”

Part 2

Rechecking the 2023 plan

Each item from the 2023 deck, checked against schema.org and current Google documentation.

2023 item	Status in 2026	Note
BreadcrumbList	**Use**	Real type; supported by Google.
WebSite, Organization, logo	**Use**	Real types; site name and logo features.
Brand	**Use, on Product**	A property of Product, not a page-level item.
“Domain”	**Doesn't exist**	No such property. Use **url**.
Sitelinks search box	**Retired**	Google stopped showing it in November 2024. [3]
Main entity / itemReviewed	**Use**	itemReviewed says what the review is about.
Review, reviewRating	**Use**	Core of review markup.
Offer	**Use, on Product**	Describes price and availability, not a review.
Recommendation	**Rarely needed**	Exists in schema.org; no Google feature.
Game (for a poker site)	**Wrong type**	Game describes a game, not a service that hosts one.
Claim	**Wrong use**	Belongs to fact-checking (ClaimReview), not review opinions.

The pattern

The 2023 plan mixed **real properties, invented ones and wrong types** in one list. Always check each item on schema.org before it reaches a developer.

Part 3

Pick the right item to review

Google's review snippets support a **specific list of item types**. Check it before choosing. [2]

You're reviewing	itemReviewed type	Watch out for
A physical product	Product	Use the product snippet guidelines too.
An app or software	SoftwareApplication	Name the operating system and category.
A restaurant, hotel or shop	LocalBusiness (or a subtype)	Only reviews **by others**, never about yourself.
A company or online service	Organization	Same self-serving rule applies.
A book, film or course	Book, Movie, Course	Use the specific type, not Thing.

Self-serving reviews

Since 2019, Google doesn't show review snippets for **LocalBusiness or Organization** reviews when the business controls the reviews about itself, for example its own reviews widget. [4]

If no type fits

Not everything has a matching review type. A guided tour, for example, isn't on the list. Then **don't force a wrong type**; describe the entity accurately and let the review stand on the page.

Part 4

A correct editorial review

An editorial review is **one reviewer's assessment** of one item. Here's a complete example with pros and cons.

Review of a Product, with positiveNotes and negativeNotes

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Review",
  "itemReviewed": {
    "@type": "Product",
    "name": "[Brand] Trail Shell Rain Jacket",
    "brand": {"@type": "Brand", "name": "[Brand]"}
  },
  "author": {"@type": "Person", "name": "[Reviewer
name]",
             "url":
"https://example.com/about/[reviewer]"},
  "datePublished": "2026-10-20",
  "reviewRating": {"@type": "Rating", "ratingValue":
4,
                   "bestRating": 5},
  "positiveNotes": {"@type": "ItemList",
"itemListElement": [
    {"@type": "ListItem", "position": 1,
     "name": "Stayed dry in 3 hours of steady
rain"}]},
  "negativeNotes": {"@type": "ItemList",
"itemListElement": [
    {"@type": "ListItem", "position": 1,
     "name": "Hood is tight over a helmet"}]},
  "publisher": {"@type": "Organization", "name": "
[Site name]"}
}
```

What each part does

itemReviewed: what was reviewed, with its own type.
author: a real person or organization, with a profile URL.
reviewRating: the score and the scale.
positiveNotes / negativeNotes: pros and cons Google supports for editorial product reviews. [5]
datePublished and **publisher:** when and where it appeared.
Everything here must also be **visible on the page**.

Part 5

Rules that catch people out

Most review markup problems aren't syntax errors. They're **policy and accuracy** problems.

1

Markup must match the page

Rating, author and pros and cons must **appear on the page** as written. [6]

2

Aggregate ratings need real users

aggregateRating summarizes **actual user reviews** shown or linked on the page, not your editorial score.

3

One item per review

A “best of” list is not one review of ten products. Mark up **each reviewed item** properly, or none.

4

Real authors only

“Admin” or “Staff” isn't an author. Use the **person who did the review**.

5

No self-serving stars

Reviews about your own business, collected by you, won't produce **review snippets**.

6

Recheck after Google changes

The sitelinks search box, FAQ and HowTo features all changed after this plan was written. **Audit markup yearly.**

Exercise

Audit one review page

Time: 20 minutes. Use a review page on your site, or a competitor's.

Step	What to do
1	Run the URL through the **Schema Markup Validator** and **Rich Results Test**. List every type found.
2	For each type and property, check it **exists on schema.org**. Flag invented ones.
3	Check **itemReviewed** against Google's supported review item types.
4	Compare rating, author and pros and cons in markup with **what's visible**.
5	Check for **self-serving** patterns and retired features (sitelinks search box).
6	Write a **corrected JSON-LD** block using page 6 as a model.

What good looks like

Every property is **real**, the item type is **supported**, and every marked-up value is **visible** on the page.

Discussion question

If the page lost its stars tomorrow, would the **review itself** still persuade a reader? What would make it more credible?

Check your understanding

Quick quiz

Answers are on the next page.

1. Valid review markup guarantees star ratings in Google:

a) True
b) False

2. “Domain” as a schema.org property:

a) Identifies the reviewing site
b) Doesn't exist; use url
c) Is required for reviews

3. The sitelinks search box in 2026:

a) Is still a rich result
b) Was retired by Google in November 2024
c) Requires Review markup

4. A hotel's own reviews widget, marked up as LocalBusiness reviews:

a) Can show review snippets
b) Is self-serving and won't show review snippets
c) Needs ClaimReview

5. Pros and cons in editorial product reviews use:

a) positiveNotes and negativeNotes
b) Claim and Recommendation
c) Game and Offer

Answers and sources

Answer key, glossary and further reading

Answer key

1: **False**. It makes a page eligible.
2: **b**.
3: **b**.
4: **b**. Self-serving.
5: **a**.

Glossary

itemReviewed: the thing a review is about.
Editorial review: one reviewer's assessment.
aggregateRating: a summary of many user ratings.
Self-serving review: a business's reviews about itself.
Rich result: an enhanced search result.
positiveNotes: structured pros.

01 **Introduction to structured data markup. Google Search Central**
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/intro-structured-data

02 **Review snippet structured data. Google Search Central**
Supported item types and requirements.
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/review-snippet

03 **Farewell, sitelinks search box. Google Search Central Blog, October 2024**
https://developers.google.com/search/blog/2024/10/sitelinks-search-box

04 **Making review rich results more helpful. Google Search Central Blog, September 2019**
https://developers.google.com/search/blog/2019/09/making-review-rich-results-more-helpful

05 **Product snippet structured data: pros and cons. Google Search Central**
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/product-snippet

06 **General structured data guidelines. Google Search Central**
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/sd-policies

Lesson by Ameneh Saeednia, built on my April 2023 schema plan for review pages and prepared with AI assistance. Examples are illustrative.