

How to Write a Book Proposal

We all have a book in us – don't we? If you believe everything you read, then yes we have. The only difficulty for most of us is getting it out! We all have ideas that we think are amazing, catchy and capture the imagination. We have stories in us that we know others would want to read and find enthralling.

So after many hours and much frustration, you have committed your work to paper or computer and you are now ready to share your masterpiece with the wider world. But how do you do this? Well, you need to get together a book proposal that accurately reflects your work and gives you the best chance possible to attract an agent or publishers attention. To help find the right agent or publisher for you, you need to accurately define the genre of your work. What audience is it aimed at? Is it a fiction or non-fiction piece? Is it a thriller, crime, fantasy, children's, self-help, cookery, biography, adventure or other piece? This stage is important as it means that the agent or publisher you approach will have an interest in the type of manuscript you are submitting.

Once you have decided on the agents or publishers you want to submit your manuscript to, there are a number of documents you need to get together in preparation:

- Synopsis
- Sample chapter or chapters
- Contents page
- Author biography
- Cover letter
- Stamped self- addressed envelope

Synopsis

A synopsis should ideally be 1-2 pages in length. It should be punchy and factual covering the main points of each chapter. A synopsis should also let the reader know what the ending to the story is. This is as a point that many authors leave out as they don't want to 'give the end away.' However, it is important that the ending is included; there should be no surprises!

Sample chapter or chapters

Different agents and publishers have different requirements in relation to the number of chapters you are required to send them. Be sure to check this out before you submit as you don't want to undersell yourself by sending only one chapter if they require 2-3 or more. Generally, anything up to three chapters is required. The sample chapter or chapters gives the prospective agent or publisher an opportunity to see your style of writing and get a flavour for the story on offer. It is always wise to include your favourite chapter or chapters as samples.

Contents page

Submitting a contents page with your proposal gives the prospective agent or publisher the opportunity to see the structure of your story and where the story goes. In essence, this is a brief outline of your story.

Author biography

When you put together your author biography you should include a brief background about yourself, any experience you have as a writer; any published works. It would be helpful to include an outline of any expertise you may have on the subject you are writing about. This is particularly relevant for non-fiction pieces like gardening, self-help etc. Of course, this may be your first attempt at writing and it is important to state that so that the reader understands where you are coming from.

Cover letter

Your cover letter should state what documents you have submitted; who the book is aimed at and why; why the book is different to other books of the same genre (what makes it stand out? What is the appeal of the book?); a brief outline of the story and some contact details.

Stamped self-addressed envelope

Most agents accept e-mailed submissions, however, some prefer a paper copy to be sent. If you wish to have your manuscript returned, you should include a stamped self-addressed envelope. This also allows the agent or publisher to send you other documents if required.

Finally, before submitting documents to prospective agent or publisher, check their submission guidelines as it is vital that you follow their requirements. Getting this wrong could mean you chance to get published ends before it has even begun!

If you need a [publisher's pack for your book](#), contact Words Worth Reading Ltd. Their experts are all published writers who know the process inside-out!