



How To Get Your Manuscript or Art Portfolio Published



Sylvan Dell Publishing





Your Manuscript

- Edit, edit, edit
- Take your time – revise as necessary
- Critique group – local or online
- Format double spaced is normal
- Length – illustrated picture books are usually 32 pages (always multiples of 4 – usually 8)
- Appropriate vocabulary for age range
 - Writer’s Digest
 - Word spellcheck:
 - tools, options, spelling & grammar, show readability



Do Your Homework

- *Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI)*
<http://www.scbwi.org/>
- *Children's Book Insider*
<http://www.write4kids.com/>
- *Children's Writer Newsletter*
<http://www.childrenswriter.com/>
- *Children's Writers and Illustrators Market*
www.writersdigest.com
- *Children's Book Council*
<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>
- *Publisher's Weekly online*
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/>



Know The Competition

- Similar titles
 - Publisher
 - Year published
 - How does your book compare?
 - How is it similar?
 - How is it different?
- No competition is not necessarily a good thing



Know Your Publishers

- Do they publish your type of book
 - Picture books, early reading, young adult
- Check their catalog - online
- Check books – touch & look
- Study them online
- Spend time in Libraries & Bookstores
- This is a marriage – need to know each other



Submission Guidelines

- Online or request instructions
 - Query, or
 - Manuscript submission with cover letter
- Follow directions!
- Agents only (getting an agent can be as difficult as finding a publisher!)
- Exclusive – ok to put an ending date (2-3 months)
- Simultaneous submissions (3-5 months)



Submission Guidelines

- Keep good records!
- SASE (Self-addressed, stamped envelope)
- Cover letter
 - no longer than one page
 - First sentence of letter or query makes or breaks it!
 - Brief description of the work
 - Why you wrote it
- How to market



Guidelines (cont)

- DO NOT say: “my children love it”
- Do look for marketing specifics: non-profits, zoos, aquariums, etc.
- Relate to their books – let them know you are familiar with their line
- Follow up? OK, with us if no acknowledgement



Our Submission Criteria

- Fun to read
- Regional or national in scope
- Elementary Curriculum Tie-in
- Niche Marketable
 - Zoos, Aquariums, Organizations
- We take submissions by email
- Illustrator choice is ours
- Closed now but reopen for submissions – Jan 1



Rejections

- Don't take it personally!
- Type of rejection
 - Form piece of paper
 - Any writing on it?
 - ANY opening with which to follow up?
- DON'T e-mail or phone editor to ask why!!!!
- DON'T ask for writing advice
- DON'T ask to whom you should send it next
- Have a plan of action
- ALWAYS have another query ready to go
- It's a numbers game



Do's and Don'ts

- Don't send manuscript without knowing the firm and their desired format – so basic but not followed!
- Don't send more than one manuscript per envelope
- Don't send more than 2 or 3 at a time (separate envelopes)
- Don't send letter addressed “to whom it may concern” or to the wrong publisher
- Don't send the manuscript with coffee stains or handwritten comments
- Do use an easy-to-read font



Other Thoughts

- It is your manuscript/art - It is not your book
- Lawyers & Agents
 - Don't be long or nit-picky
- Relationship: Author, Illustrator, Publisher, Editor
 - Find out who in the office does what and ask question at the appropriate level. Go to admin for admin.
 - To addee versus cc addee
- Join PMA if you are self-publishing
- Use Google (& Alerts) and learn your market
- Take Initiative in your promotion. Don't give up



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Questions?