

Links and information about traditional publishing.

10 Things to Remember about Traditional Publishing

1. Money always flows toward the author. You should never pay for representation. You should never be required to buy copies of your own book as a condition for publication.
2. Large publishers often offer small advances to new authors (usually \$5,000 or less). Small but legitimate publishers may not offer an advance.
3. The advance is yours to keep so long as you fulfill all the conditions of the contract. Generally advances are paid in thirds—one-third when you sign the contract, one-third when you hand in the manuscript, and one-third when revisions are finished and the book is ready to go into production.
4. Royalties are a percentage based on the cost of the book. Depending on the contract, it can be on the net price or the cover price (cover price is a better deal, but harder to get). You start getting royalties after your book sells enough copies that the royalties cover your advance. This is called selling through. Once your book sells through, you should get a royalty check at least twice a year. If your book does not sell through, you still get to keep all the advance.
5. It is easier to place a book with a traditional publisher if you have an agent. Exceptions are if you are submitting to a university press or very small independent press. Agents do not handle magazine or newspaper submissions (unless you are very famous and selling to the *New Yorker*)
6. If an agent represents you, you will be asked to sign a contract. It should define the term for which the agent will represent you and outline the agent's responsibilities to you and yours to the agent, including all financial arrangements. The agent will represent all of your work. You do not have multiple agents for multiple books, although you may have an additional agent for foreign sales or sales to other media (e.g., film). The contract should include the conditions under which you or the agent can terminate the contract.
7. Agents generally take 15% of any money you make (including your advance). A good agent is worth every penny. They know the market and can target your submission appropriately, and they get responses much more quickly than if you send your material directly to the publisher. Plus, agents will give you feedback on why you are getting rejected and they will handle financial negotiations if a publisher or multiple publishers (oh happy day!) are interested in your book.
8. You will have a fiduciary relationship with your agent. This means agents act for you in receiving monies from the publisher and disburse them to you after they take their cut. Although this may sound sketchy, it is normal business practice.

9. Nonfiction can be sold on the strength of a book proposal. New fiction writers generally must have a completed work before an agent will try to sell it.

10. Be sure to follow the directions of the agent or publisher you are submitting to. If they tell you to send a query, then send only a query. If they ask for two chapters, send the first two chapters. If they ask for 10 pages, send the first 10 pages, not your favorite part from the middle of the book.

There is a lot of good information on the Web. Here are some places to get started.

WRITING NONFICTION BOOK PROPOSALS

Adler & Robin Books

<http://www.adlerbooks.com/howto.html#TradeBkProp>

Samples of nonfiction and computer book proposals

How to Write a Nonfiction Book Proposal

<http://blog.nathanbransford.com/2007/02/how-to-write-nonfiction-book-proposal.html>

WRITING A QUERY Letter

Charlotte Dillon.

<http://www.charlottedillon.com/query.html>

FAQ, samples and more

Query Letters to Literary Agents about Book Proposals

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Query-Letters-to-Literary-Agents-about-Book-Proposals---Three-Warnings&id=674622>

FINDING AN AGENT

Be sure to check any suggested agents against the resources found under the Staying Out of Trouble section

Agent Query

http://www.agentquery.com/writer_hq.aspx

Lets you search for an agent.

Duotrope's Digest

<http://www.duotrope.com/index.aspx>

Allows you to search for publishers of fiction or poetry (no non-fiction or memoir) by genre, pay scale, royalties, and medium (electronic or print). This is a fee-charging site with a 7-day free trial.

SOME GOOD SITES TO VISIT

AbsoluteWrite

<http://absolutewrite.com>

Check The Business of Writing tab on the home page.

AbsoluteWrite Water Cooler

<http://www.absolutewrite.com/forums> .

The Ask the Agent and Ask the Editor sections under Publishing are especially helpful.

The Eclectics Connection:

<http://www.eclectics.com/writing/writing.html>

Mainly for Romance writers, but general interest sections include Query Letters, Getting Published, and Manuscript Formatting.

Science Fiction Writer Robert J. Sawyer's Manuscript Format Checklist

<http://www.sfwriter.com/mschk1st.htm>

SUBMITTING PICTURE BOOKS

<http://www.underdown.org>

STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE

Predators and Editors

<http://www.invirtuo.cc/prededitors>

The place to find out if agents and publishers are legit. Don't sign anything without checking this site.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America

Writer Beware

<http://www.sfwaw.org/for-authors/writer-beware>

Warnings about the schemes, scams, and pitfalls that threaten writers. Not just for SF/fantasy writers.

Legal Corner for Authors

<http://03475dd.netsolhost.com/WordPress>

WRITING FOR NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Onlinenewspapers.com

<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/usstate/uscalifo.htm>

State by state listing of newspapers (some with links). Useful if you are trying to sell a story to a newspaper.

Eight Tips for Getting Published in Magazines

<http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/jun03/bell.htm>