

Do You Want to be a Writer

Maybe you have written a poem or a story or even a novel, and now you aren't sure what to do. Luckily, there are plenty of resources and sites where you can try to publish your work.

If you've written **poetry or short fiction/nonfiction**:

What do I need to submit my work to a literary magazine?

- A Submittable account: <https://www.submittable.com/>
- Several edited pieces formatted with Times New Roman, 12 pt font, and 1.5 spacing. Include your name, address, email address, and phone number in the header
- A cover letter (how to: <https://medium.com/a-writers-life/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-for-a-literary-journal-submission-df0d3687907d>)
- A biography and author photo

Where can I find places to submit my work?

Poets & Writers: https://www.pw.org/literary_magazines (most comprehensive database)

New Pages Call for Submissions: <http://www.newpages.com/classifieds/calls-for-submissions> (who is currently looking for submissions)

Calyx: Caldwell's literary magazine email your stories, poems, or art to calyx@caldwell.edu

What to look for:

- When are their submission deadlines?
- How many pieces do they take at one time?
- What document format do they take?
- What is the word count cap for prose pieces?
- How do I submit?
- Does the magazine share my aesthetic?

Tips for submitting prose or poetry to literary magazines:

Make sure you are within the word count range. If you are over, it could be an instant rejection as most literary magazines assign a certain amount of space per piece.

Do not submit more than one prose piece or too many poems to a literary magazine unless they explicitly say they will take more than one.

Make sure your piece has been edited and is in top form (send it to a trusted friend or professor for feedback).

Make certain your piece fits the aesthetic or genre of the magazine you are submitting to.

So You Want to Publish a Book

What to do before you publish:

Finish your book. This seems self-explanatory, but you need to have a finished book before you even think of sending it out to agents or publishers.

Do some heavy edits, revisions, and finally copy editing. You'll need to look at your work objectively, make lists of what needs to be fixed, and break out the red pen or track-changes to make sure you edit thoroughly. Once you have the major edits out of the way, go line-by-line through your work, smoothing sentences and beefing up or cutting down descriptions.

Send it off to some trusted beta readers. Beta readers are people (usually friends or other writers) who can be objective and give you good feedback on your work. You will want 3-5 people to give you feedback.

Edit again! You'll be sick of rereading your work, but you'll need to look at the feedback your beta readers give you and incorporate what they said. Then, go through and make sure you catch all of your typos.

Decide whether you want to traditionally publish or publish independently.

Traditional Publishing

Pros: Most of the work is done for you in terms of publishing, marketing may be done by the publisher, possibly more professional product, more likely to get into a brick and mortar bookstore if you land a major publisher

Cons: Less control over your work, you may have a hard time getting your rights back, longer wait time for publication, publishers aren't marketing middle and lower tier books as much anymore, smaller presses are more likely to take a chance on a new author but they often aren't worth the return on investment

A query letter is a letter you send to literary agents to entice them to ask for the rest of your book. It should be one page and less than 300 words; short, sweet, and to the point.

Formatting a query letter:

<https://nybookeditors.com/2015/12/how-to-write-a-darn-good-query-letter/>

Websites like Query Tracker (<https://querytracker.net/>) have a database of publishers and literary agents. Some publishers don't require literary agents but many do.

Independent Publishing

Pros: complete control over your work, more profit as there is no middle man, you don't have to worry about a publisher or agent changing your work, smaller lead times for publication, more freedom in terms of genre or design

Cons: less support as there isn't a publishing company, less visibility/you need to work harder for visibility, you need to learn how to market your book on your own, smaller chance of being in brick and mortar stores, the costs fall on you

Things you will need to publish independently:

A professional book cover (invest your money here if you have a limited budget)

Professional editing

Formatting for ebook and paperback (can be done on your own)

Ways to market your book online

Resources for publishing independently:

The Self-Publishing Boot Camp by S.K. Quinn

For Love or Money by S.K. Quinn

Write. Publish. Repeat. by Sean Platt and Johnny B. Truant

How to Market a Book by Joanna Penn (any book by Joanna Penn will be helpful)