

## The Nonfiction Query / Pitch Letter

### Before You Submit

Be honest with yourself about the state of your manuscript. Check the details: pagination, formatting, and spelling. Do your research to determine if a publisher a good fit by check its backlist.

### The Query Letter

A query letter (or pitch letter) introduces the manuscript and writer to a publisher in a concise, professional manner—with the aim of selling the manuscript (in present or altered form) to a prospective editor. It should **introduce who you are** (a brief bio and contact information), **what you've written** (a brief novel synopsis or overview of nonfiction subject, according to publishing house guidelines), and **why the publisher should be interested** (a basic outline of your manuscript and its marketability).

#### Be concise and convincing:

- Get to the point quickly. Think of the letter as a hook or elevator pitch.
- Introduce what you've written, its length, and who will read it.
- Offer the strengths of your manuscript. (Why do people need to read this?)
- Describe the market for books like yours. (Are there similar books? How is yours different?)
- Convince the publisher invest in *you*. (What is your author profile?)

#### Be simple and professional:

- Use plain English.
- Offer helpful comparisons to titles in the publisher's catalogue.
- Remember that you're asking for an investment: this is a business proposition.

#### DO:

- Follow publishing house guidelines.
- Verify whether or not simultaneous submissions are accepted.
- Be appreciative.
- Be your own agent: keep creative distance; sell your work like it's someone else's; and include any positive feedback it has received from industry professionals.

#### DON'T:

- Be purposefully vague or mysterious about your findings or conclusions.
- Submit multiple pitches to the same publisher at the same time.
- Impose deadlines on publishers.

### Recommended Resources

[Query Shark: How To Write Query Letters ... or, really, how to revise query letters so they actually work](http://www.queryshark.blogspot.ca)  
[[www.queryshark.blogspot.ca](http://www.queryshark.blogspot.ca)]

["How to Write a Cover Letter to an Agent or a Publisher"](http://susanswanonline.com/wpress/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-to-an-agent-or-a-publisher) [<http://susanswanonline.com/wpress/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-to-an-agent-or-a-publisher>] (Susan Swan)