



HOW TO WRITE A BOOK IN 90 DAYS OR LESS

WITH DR. PAULA FELLINGHAM

Module 8

- 1. If you have decided to go with a traditional publisher, you need to begin working on your Book Proposal. If you're self-publishing and want to distribute your book in bookstores, you should have a Book Proposal.**

How to Write a Book Proposal that Sells

The proposal is the sales pitch for your book. You must first sell your book to the publisher. Don't try to skip the book proposal and send in a completed manuscript. Publishers buy 90% of their books based on proposals. Because the proposal previews your book and details its market, publishers want to read it before reading a complete manuscript. Sometimes it's difficult for them to find time to read entire manuscripts, but they usually review a proposal in a timely way.

Even if a publisher doesn't require a proposal, you should create one for your own use. It not only forces you to think through critical aspects of your book, but will help you clarify your material; target your market; discover weak spots in your organization; and find the key points that book publishers' sales reps will use to sell your book to stores.

Remember, publishers aren't all the same and they don't all publish the same type of books. Your manuscript might not be right for a specific publisher. Obviously you are the person most familiar with your book. You're in the best position to inform potential publishers about why they should buy it. You know why you wrote it, who it is intended for, and how it will benefit readers.

Your proposal should be an irresistible sales pitch that first helps you sell your book to a publisher and then helps them sell it to readers.

Sections of a Book Proposal

- 1. An Overview** section: a description of what you are selling in a way that makes it sound like a must-have.



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2. A **Comparison** section: an analysis of other books on the subject, comparing them with the unique features of your book.
3. A **Target Audience** section: a description of the intended audience.
4. A **Marketing** section: an explanation of where and how your book can be sold.
5. A **Promotion and Publicity** section: a list of all the possible avenues of free promotion and publicity.
6. An **“About the Author” Section**: they want to know about you, your qualifications, your marketing connections, and your ability to sell the book.
7. An **Estimated Time of Completion** section: the delivery date of your completed manuscript.
8. **Specifications on size and special features**: length of manuscript, non-textual information etc.

Begin by Writing the Overview

Type the word “Overview” at the top of a page. Then open your proposal with a “hook” that previews the subject or theme of your book. Find a statistic or situation that you think would get their attention and inspire them to read further. Type this under “Overview”.

Next, describe and establish the following:

1. Your potential market: who will want your book; your potential readers. This description goes directly beneath the opening hook. Example: “*The Road to Recovery* is written for the millions who suffer from alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse.”
2. Second, you need a compelling statement of why people need your book. A sentence to a paragraph will do. If your book solves a problem, describe that. Then describe how your book will help readers. How will your book benefit readers?

Comparing Your Book with the Competition

Publishers want books that are distinctive and different. Your proposal needs a page explaining why your product is superior to the competition. The comparison you provide helps the editor sell your book to the key people at the publishing firm who make the final decision.

Extol your book’s virtues and convince publishers how special it is. If you don’t know your competition, go to a library or bookstore and find out.

1. Type “Comparison” at the top of a page.
2. List several recent leading titles in your subject area that have been written for the general public. Always include the author, publisher, date of publication and price.

Describe How Your Book Can be Marketed

1. Type “Marketing” at the top of a page.



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2. Describe your market's readers, bookstores, specialty stores, organizations, publications in which your book can be advertised, etc.
3. Explain why you believe your book will appeal to each market.

Promotion and Publicity

1. Type "Promotion and Publicity" at the top of a page.
2. List every source that might present a promotional opportunity for your book, including magazines, newspapers, television, radio talk shows, websites, email, etc.

Describing "Front Matter"

Front matter is the written material in your book that precedes the first chapter. It can include a Title Page, Dedication, Table of Contents, Forward, Introduction, Acknowledgments.

1. Type the heading "Front Matter."
2. List each item you plan to include, giving a rough estimate of its length.

"Back Matter"

Back matter is the written material in your book that follows the last chapter, such as Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. If your book includes any of those, complete the following steps:

1. Type the heading "Back Matter."
2. List each item you plan to include, giving a rough estimate of its length.

Describe Illustrative Material

Knowing about the illustrative material you plan to include in your book can help the publisher begin thinking about the best size and format for your book. It also helps them estimate the potential production and selling costs.

1. Type the heading "Illustrative Material."
2. In a paragraph, describe what you intend to use as illustrative material such as pictures, charts, forms, drawings, and how they will add to the readers' understanding of the material.

Estimate Length

Give the publisher an idea of how long your finished manuscript will be in double-spaced pages. One sentence is enough. A good rule of thumb is that 250 words equal one double-spaced manuscript page. An example is, "The author estimates the finished manuscript will be approximately 86,000 words or 375 manuscript pages."



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1. Type the heading “Estimated Length of Manuscript.”
2. Give the estimated length either in words or in double-spaced manuscript pages (include all front and back material).

Estimated Time of Completion

Publishers need to know how long you think it will take you to finish the first draft of your book. This enables them to tentatively schedule the time of your book’s release.

1. Type the heading “Estimated Time of Completion.”
2. Considering all you know about other demands on your time, and your own writing speed, give your best guess regarding how long it will take you to complete your book.

“About the Author” Establishing Your Credentials

The goal here is to write a one-page summary of your personal and professional experience that makes your qualifications for writing your book crystal clear.

If your book is a novel, this may not apply as much as if it is a self-help book. Your goal is to establish yourself as an expert; someone uniquely qualified to write your book.

1. At the top of a page, type “About the Author.”
2. Cite relevant degrees, awards, job experience, articles, relevant positions you hold or have held, etc.

Homework:

Write a book proposal using the guidelines above.



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