



Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission

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Paper Angel Press
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Introduction

WHO I AM

- Managing Editor of Paper Angel Press and its imprints
- Novelist, short story author, and technical writer
- Technical Publications manager and college instructor, certified project manager
- Many, many years of experience in all areas of the publications field
- Executive producer of *Small Publishing in a Big Universe* podcast

WHO WE ARE

- Our imprints
 - Paper Angel Press: fiction and mysteries
 - Water Dragon Publishing: fantasy and science fiction
 - Unruly Voices: memoirs, poetry, and self-improvement
- In business for more than 6 years
- To bring new works of fiction and art to light. To give people a chance to realize their dreams. We're here to do it differently.

Why This Workshop is Important

While the quality of your story might speak for itself, how you present it when you submit it to an agent or publisher can make or break your chances of its acceptance before it's even been read.

WHAT THIS WORKSHOP IS

- Guidelines to improve the chances of your submission getting read

WHAT THIS WORKSHOP ISN'T

- A “magic bullet” or “secret recipe” that guarantees the acceptance of your submission

Submission Requirements

Every market and agent is going to have their own submissions requirements.
Make certain you research what they are before submitting your work.

Submission Requirements

DO

- Research the market or agent to understand their submissions process and requirements.
- Read and FOLLOW the submissions requirements.
 - Is your story in a genre that they accept?
 - Is your story the right length?
 - Are there specific formatting requirements?

If in doubt: Ask.

DON'T

- Submit a story in genre that they *clearly* state they don't accept.
- Submit a story significantly outside the specified lengths.
- Submit a story that does not meet their formatting requirements.
- Submit a story using a method other than the one specified.
- Misspell the name of the agent or editor.

Submission Requirements: Examples

Submission Requirements

Your story:

- should be approximately 2,000 – 10,000 words in length.
- should be fantasy or science fiction (or at least contain fantastical elements).
- should not contain erotica, or excessive violence or gore.
- can be part of an ongoing series you might be writing.
- can have been previously published (with proof that you hold the current publishing rights).
- may be submitted simultaneously to other markets (but please let us know).

Please submit only one story per submission and only one story per month.

We are **currently seeking** high-quality novel-length **science fiction** and **fantasy** submissions of all types. We are **not interested** in erotica, strictly religious fiction, short stories (other than submission for a specific anthology), dark/gruesome fantasy, or poetry.

Manuscripts should be written in good taste and be aimed at a well-read, mature audience.

We **only accept** submissions of novels between 75,000 and 100,000 words. We work with new and established authors.

Manuscript Formats

Send us your complete, finished manuscripts in digital (.DOCX, .RTF, or .ODT) format to [dragongems \(at\) waterdragonpublishing.com](mailto:dragongems@waterdragonpublishing.com). Please use a standard manuscript format. If you're not sure what one is, [here's a good source](#).

Include the following in your cover letter/email:

- Title of your story
- Your real name
- Your physical mail address
- Your preferred email address
- Story genre
- Approximate word count
- Synopsis

If you're not sure if your story is something that we'd be interested in publishing, please feel free to query us at [dragongems \(at\) waterdragonpublishing.com](mailto:dragongems@waterdragonpublishing.com) in advance of submitting your manuscript.

Manuscript Formats

Presenting your manuscript in a standard, readable format is one of the first steps in being taken seriously as a professional author. The appearance of your manuscript gives a first impression of your ability to take that job seriously.

Fortunately, manuscript formats for fiction are generally standard — and simple.

Manuscript Formats

DO

- Research and *understand* any manuscript formatting requirements:
 - Are there any specific fonts that should or should not be used?
 - What line spacing should be used?
- Include standard page layout elements.
- Include any required information, such as estimated word count and contact information.
- Submit your manuscript only in one of the specified file formats.

DON'T

- Use fancy fonts in an effort to make your manuscript “stand out”.
- Adjust the line spacing to make a story seem longer or shorter.
- Don't use blank paragraphs to force chapters to start on a new page.
- Pre-format your document.
- Omit any required information.
- Submit your manuscript in a file format not listed in the requirements.

Manuscript Formats: Examples

FIRST PAGE

Steven Radecki
123 Main Street
My City, California 12345
(123) 456-7890
sfwriteratlarge@gmail.com

approximately 36,400 words

PAGE HEADERS

The Light of Distant Stars

Radecki - 2

A faint chime sounded on his desk. It was muted, letting him know that he could choose to

Cover Letters

Your cover letter functions as an introduction to you and your story.

- While cover letters are often requested, they are often read after the submission, or may not be read at all.
- For an email submission, your email message can function as your cover letter instead of sending a separate document.

Cover Letters

DO

- Keep it cordial and brief.
- Include your contact information.
- Provide credentials relevant to your writing and publishing experience, or the content of the story.
- Provide information that might help the agent or editor market your book:
 - “Will appeal to fans of Civil War history.”
 - “It’s like *Harry Potter*, but with vampires.”

DON'T

- Repeat the entire synopsis or summary.
- Try to be too “cute” or humorous (unless the book is a comedy).
- Include your entire writing or professional resume.

Summaries and Synopses

Most markets and agents will request a synopsis or summary of the entire work.

Summaries and Synopses

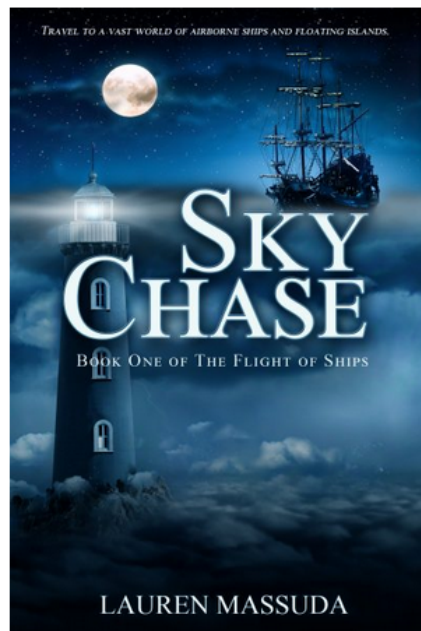
DO

- Keep the length of the summary or synopsis proportional to the length of the work:
 - Short story: 3-5 paragraphs
 - Novel: 1-3 pages (*our recommendation*)
- Focus on the main plot points, major events, or character development moments.
- For a long work: Provide an overview of the structure of the story.

DON'T

- Provide exhaustive descriptive detail.
- Re-tell the entire story in expository form.
- Include information not presented in the story.

Summaries and Synopses: Examples



Sky Chase

Book One of The Flight of Ships

Lauren Massuda

Travel to a vast world of airborne ships and floating islands.

The crew of *The Raging Storm*, led by 16-year-old Captain Cordelia, protects the floating Caelum Islands from strange creatures and criminals.

When Cordelia is poisoned, she must find the cure before time runs out. Her only hope is to join an alliance with a mysterious doctor — one who has carried a grudge against her father for years.

Not only will Cordelia have to race against time, but she will have to face the demons that keep invading her mind.



All That Was Asked

by Vanessa MacLaren-Wray (Author)

★★★★★ 6 ratings

See all formats and editions

Kindle

\$2.99

Audiobook

1 Credit

Hardcover

\$19.99

Paperback

\$9.99 ✓prime

Read with Our Free App

1 Used from \$23.79

7 New from \$19.99

2 New from \$9.99

It was supposed to be an easy jaunt to observe the stick-like aliens of Deep Valley Universe.

But Ansegwe — perpetual student, aspiring poet, and scion of the (allegedly criminal) Varayla Syndicate — well, he just has to ruin everything. As everyone knows, Ansegwe may have sensibility, but he's not long on sense.

When a weird, twitchy little creature attaches itself to him, Ansegwe violates every protocol in the handbook to save its life. Finding himself in all kinds of trouble, Ansegwe needs to make some serious life changes, starting with that complicated family of his.

Ansegwe may just have to grow up ... now that he's adopted an alien.

Before You Hit “Send”

Because everyone involved in the process is human, most agents and editors don't expect a manuscript to be perfect in absolutely every way.

However, some things will immediately send up red flags when the agent or editor receives your manuscript.

Before You Hit “Send”

DO

- Spell-check and grammar-check *all* of your documents.
- Verify that you have included all of the required information or documents with your submission.
- Make certain that you addressed the submission to the correct person.
- Make certain you have attached all of the necessary files.

DON'T

- Include the submission in the body of the email. (Unless the submission requirements specifically say to do so.)
- Forget to include the attachments.

Communication

Professional communication makes a lasting impression on the agent or editor with whom you hope to have a long and productive publishing relationship.

Communication

DO

- Be courteous and professional.
- Be respectful of timeframes.
 - If a market states they try to respond within X days, don't pounce on Day $X+1$ demanding to know why you haven't received a response.
 - It is not at all uncommon for it to take 6-12 months before you hear back from an agent or publisher.
 - Silence does not necessarily mean rejection. Be patient.

DON'T

- Treat a rejection as an invitation for debate.
 - Accept the feedback (if any is provided, but most often it won't be) and move on.
 - Not every story is a fit for every market or the timing for a market.
- Make the agent or editor have to follow up with you to get a response.

What Happens Next

IF YOUR STORY IS ACCEPTED

- Lots of good stuff beyond the scope of this discussion.

IF YOUR STORY IS NOT ACCEPTED

- Assess any feedback received.
- Keep writing and submit again.

Q & A

The background of the slide is a faded, sepia-toned image of a library. In the foreground, several large, open books are fanned out, their pages showing text. In the background, tall wooden bookshelves are filled with numerous books, creating a sense of a vast collection of knowledge.

Related Sessions

You might want to check out these sessions as well:

- Ask an Editor: Short Fiction Writing
<https://discon3.org/session/ask-an-editor-short-fiction-writing>
- Ask An Editor: Long-Form Writing
<https://discon3.org/session/ask-an-editor-long-form-writing>

Contacting Us

- Websites

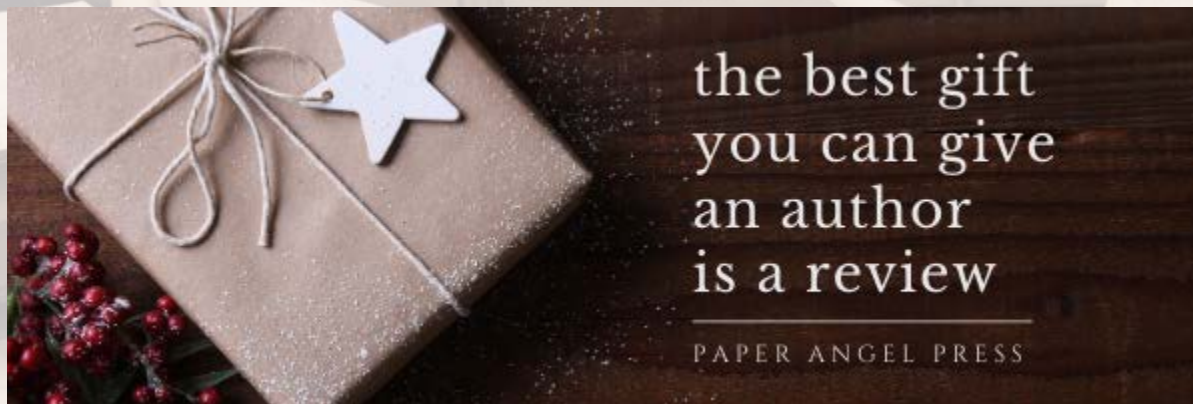
- Paper Angel Press:
paperangelpress.com
- Water Dragon Publishing:
waterdragonpublishing.com
- Unruly Voices:
unrulyvoices.com
- Small Publishing in a Big Universe:
spbu-podcast.com

- Email

- publishing@paperangelpress.com
- spbupodcast@gmail.com

- Social Media

- Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - YouTube
- Presentation available here:
<http://paperangelpress.com/resources>



Thank you!