

BOOK PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

A **Book Proposal** is a query with an outline and some samples of your writing.

While **length of book proposals** may vary, for purposes of this conference, **please limit your submission to a total of 20 pages, NOT including cover letter etc.** *Each faculty member will personally be reading many proposals, so this limit on length is of **utmost importance.***

Query letters, outlines, synopses, and market analyses may be single-spaced, but manuscripts must be double-spaced.

Components of a NON-FICTION Book Proposal

Query Letter: A query letter contains a topic sentence, a paragraph developing your topic, market analysis (see below), the audience for your book, and your qualifications to write on this topic.

Market Analysis: A listing of books already available on the market, covering a similar topic to yours. Indicate in what way(s) your idea or your treatment of that idea differs from what others have already done. Why does the market need one more book on your topic?

Table of Contents

Chapter Summary Outline: Devote one short paragraph to each chapter, summarizing the specific idea and any special items about your treatment of it.

Sample Chapters: One or two chapters. The first chapter is essential. Please limit submission to first **20 pages (this does NOT include Query letters, Market Analysis, Table of Contents or Chapter Summary Outline, etc.)**.

Other Items of Importance (Optional): A list of associations you belong to or contacts that could be of importance in promoting your book. Endorsements you may have that could affect the salability of the book. Indicate how you would be involved in promoting your book. You may have other special materials (newspaper clippings about your biographical subject, photos etc.). Limit these to one or two samples, please!

Components of a FICTION Book Proposal

Query Letter: See suggestions for queries above. Indicate in what genre you are writing and where you see it fitting into the overall current fiction market.

Synopsis: Brief summary of the entire book (5 or 6 pages maximum).

Sample Chapters: One or two chapters – **see Non-Fiction for what is not included**



QUERY LETTERS for magazine articles or book ideas

A Query Letter:

... is a letter to an editor in which you attempt to sell him/her on

- the value of your idea
- your ability to write about it for his/her readers, ... and also
- predisposes an editor to read your completed manuscript with interest
- while helping you shape your article to fit your intended market

Two Types of Query Letters:

- *Idea* Query: A synopsis of the idea, perhaps including a couple of anecdotes, quotes and/or pertinent facts
- *Outline* Query: Idea query plus a suggested outline of your article.

What to include in your Query Letter:

Your subject -- specific topic

Your thesis -- In a single sentence, what do you want to say to the reader?

Your working title

Timeliness -- Why this article fits today's audience. Indicate if it is seasonal.

Your style -- Anecdotal, personal experience, straight reporting, essay...

Your credentials -- Qualifications to handle subject; writing credits (optional)

Uniqueness -- What do you do that others have not done with this subject?

Reader benefits -- **Don't tell the editor why you want to write the piece.**

Do tell why the reader will want to read it!

Photos -- Will you be sending any?

Time frame -- How soon will you have the article ready?

Four Essentials

Be prepared: Do sufficient research so you can do an article with substance. It is often helpful to include a well-written suggested lead paragraph.

Be brief: One page, plus an outline.

Be professional: Address the editor by name. Type your letter neatly and submit it to the proper market.

Be at your best: Make it a lively sample of your best writing, filled with enthusiasm for your subject and concern for excellence and God's glory.

REMEMBER: A query is your sales pitch for the idea God has laid on your heart!



Adapted from An Introduction to Christian Writing, by Ethel Herr