

BASIC TIPS ON BOOK PROPOSALS

Your book proposal should include the following elements:

Title page: A cover sheet with the book's working title and your name (as you'd like it to appear on the book) centered in the middle of the page, "Book Proposal" typed in the upper-left corner, and your name (not a pseudonym), address, phone number, and e-mail in the bottom-right corner.

Author's Bio: A brief biography of yourself, listing your educational background, writing credentials (books and articles published), qualifications to write credibly about your book's topic, plus any previous media experience or social-media presence you may have.

Synopsis (*for fiction or narrative nonfiction*): One or two pages that describe what your story is about, written in present tense. ("She does this and he does that.") Make the synopsis as exciting as your story.

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline (*for nonfiction*): List your chapter titles and briefly describe the content of each chapter.

Three Sample Chapters: For fiction (or narrative nonfiction), these must be the *first* chapters. For nonfiction, should be the first chapter plus two others from anywhere in the book.

Below are the questions publishers ask about every manuscript they receive to decide whether or not to vote on accepting it. Be sure to address at least most of these questions in your proposal.

- *Who is the main target audience (male or female, age range, life situation)?* What is the estimated size of your target audience? (Use statistics if applicable, and be sure to cite the source(s).)
- *What section of the bookstore will it go in?* What genre would it be categorized under?
- *How does this book differ from others in the market?* List books that would compete, directly or indirectly, with your book. Include the title, author's name, publisher's name, year of publication, and format (hardcover, trade paperback, mass-market paperback, e-book). Describe each book briefly, then tell how your book is different.
- *What is the take-away value?* How do you anticipate readers being changed or helped by your book?
- *How can you help promote it?* Do you speak at seminars, professional associations, or civic clubs? Do you have a website, blog, or e-newsletter where you can highlight the book to your target audience?
- *How can it be used?* (e.g., Sunday school elective, textbook, organization giveaway)

For more suggestions on writing a proposal, visit these websites:

[Mary DeMuth, multi-published author](#)

[Creating Good Fiction Proposals](#) (four-part blog series) by **Jeff Gerke**

[Writing a Book Proposal](#) by **Michael Hyatt**, chairman (and former CEO) of **Thomas Nelson Publishers**

[How to Write a Book Proposal](#) by **Rachelle Gardner**, agent

[How to Write a Synopsis](#) by **Marg Gilks**

[Preparing a Killer Fiction Proposal](#) (a 29-page article with samples) by **Karen Wiesner**

Recommended Books:

Writing a Winning Book Proposal by Michael Hyatt

How to Write a Book Proposal by Michael Larsen

Your Novel Proposal: From Creation to Contract: The Complete Guide to Writing Query Letters, Synopses and Proposals for Agents and Editors

How to Write Irresistible Query Letters by Lisa Collier Cool

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